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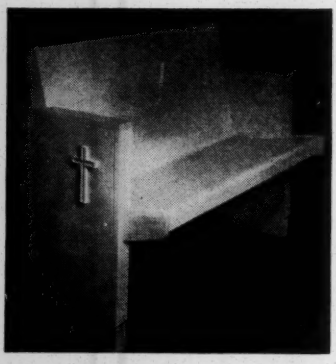

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SARA, MOTHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

"Once upon a time, in a far-off country, there lived a beautiful princess." The beloved stories of childhood so often begin that way, and continue through incredible difficulties and dangers until the last magic phrase, "they lived happily ever after." In a true sense, the oldest of these stories is to be found in chapters 12-23 of Genesis, wherein is recounted the saga of Sara and Abraham, the parents of all believers. The princess in this story, for such is the meaning of her name, was, like Banquo, destined to beget a line of kings although no sharer herself in the royal power. The great names of Israel, from David and Solomon down through the family line to the King of Kings himself, trace their earthly origin back to the goat-hair tent, half hidden in the Northern Negeb almost four millennia ago. God entered into the hill country and called His chosen people in the persons of Abraham and Sara.

Attention has been focused on Abraham throughout the history of the Church (though with less emphasis in recent centuries), and a renewal of interest in biblical themes will surely see more written on him, especially after the warming and revealing study done a few years ago by Father Oesterreicher.[1] But what of the princess? A selective study of patristic and medieval sources reveals much that is of interest and value. Sara was not a Boadicea, an Eleanor of Aquitaine, or an Elizabeth; it was not so much in her own deeds as in her descendents that she shaped destiny. Yet she stands as a vital and powerful figure. It can be said of her, as was said of her husband, "the slayers of dragons, the scalers of skies, throw their spears, rob the sun, and make their names in the passion of early manhood, but when the call came to Abraham, he was past the vigor and dreams of youth. His adventures were of the spirit, his battles within."[2] What are the facts about Sara, culled from Genesis?

(1) She travelled through Palestine with her husband; then down into Egypt, where she was taken into the harem of the Pharaoh and later released (*Gen.* 12 and 13).

[1] "Abraham Our Father," *Orate Fratres* (*Worship*), XXV (1950-51), 559-73.

[2] *Ibid.*, 560.

(2) Some time later, being barren, she asked her husband to produce an heir through her handmaid, Agar (16).

(3) The slave, disdaining her, was driven out by Sara; Agar returned on orders from God and submitted (16).

(4) "Her I will bless, giving thee a son by her; and him too I will bless, giving him whole nations for his posterity. She will be the mother of kings and peoples" (17:16).

(5) Her laughter at the idea of bearing a child; denial of laugh (18).

(6) Alternate tradition of Sara's beguiling of Abimelech (20).

(7) The birth of Isaac; second and final dismissal of Ishmael and Agar (21).

(8) Death and burial (23).

These items are supplemented by other biblical mention: she is the living rock out of which was quarried the great nation, to be hewn to God's liking. "Look to the rock from which you were hewn and look to the quarry from which you were dug; look to Abraham your father, and to Sara who bore you" (*Isaias* 51:1-2). She is the model of faith for Saint Paul (*Rom.* 4:19; *Hebr.* 11:11), and she is a type of the heavenly Jerusalem (*Gal.* 4:22-27). For Peter, she is the model of wifely modesty and obedience (*I Pet.* 3:2); and, of course, she is the lineal ancestress of Christ, Our Lord (*Matt.* 1:1-2).

What we know of Sara's life can be sifted down to some specific problems, problems that were of interest to the early ecclesiastical writers, and are still of some concern today.

A. The age of Sara.

B. The "Sister" of Abraham; a lie?

C. Her laughter, and later denial of it; a lie?

D. Her donation of Agar; later treatment of Agar; adultery, cruelty?

E. Her prerogatives and her praise; merited?

A. THE AGE OF SARA

The question of Sara's age is a vexing one. It seems clear that the numbers given in Genesis for this (as for many other things) are symbolic; yet it seems equally clear that "it had ceased to be

with Sara after the manner of women" (*Gen.* 18:11). Hence, explaining her charms for the Pharaoh and for Abimelech merely by asserting that her age was symbolic is no more a complete answer than is that of the derisive literalist who paints the picture of a weirdly wrinkled old crone, and so throws the whole account out the window. It would seem to be reasonable to suggest that Sara was a sister to those remarkable women who have appeared throughout history as agelessly lovely, women who all have very definitely left their youth behind, yet could well attract the attention of a king. Is it far-fetched to put Sara in the same company? This would readily explain the two-fold difficulty that she was beyond child-bearing but still alluring. It is surely more acceptable than the labored explanation of Ambrose that the secret of Sara's charm, despite her advanced years, was "her virtue and modesty, more delightful to man than mere beauty."[3]

B. THE "SISTER" OF ABRAHAM; A LIE?

The "sister" of Abraham is another fertile field for comment. Most writers bend their pens mightily to exculpate the couple. Today's sensible approach to this puzzle is to analyze the prevailing laws and customs of the time, and therein find an excuse for conduct that today would ill become a patriarch and his wife.[4] However, the Fathers, despite their lack of the precise knowledge of very ancient times that today's scholars possess, seem in many cases to have instinctively found the same type of justification centuries ago.

Ambrose, dealing with the whole moral tone of the Abraham-Sara story, recalls that the couple had only just left Chaldean superstition behind them, that in addition to being fragile human beings they had neither Moses nor the Gospel to guide them, that much of what we would today term *peccatum* can, in their case, better be called *mysterium*.[5] And Augustine labors mightily to show that Sara escaped unscathed from the hands of Pharaoh and Abimelech for two reasons: (a) it is clear, he says, from the second chapter of Esther that endless months were spent in aug-

[3] *De Abraham, Lib.* I, *cap.* 1 (*MPL,* XIV, 444). In chapter 9 (474) he advises the reader to "learn from Abraham what to seek in a wife . . . not gold or silver, but character."

[4] E. Sutcliffe, "Genesis," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Nelson, 1953), 139-g.

[5] *De Abr., cap.* 4 (450-454).

menting the natural charms of a new "wife" before she would be brought into the king's presence; and (b) even if this were not so in the present instance, God's providence saw to it that the kings were much too preoccupied with plagues to have any time for play.[6] The allegorists find a staunch champion in Martin of Leon, who borrows and develops an older idea sketched out by Isidore of Seville. For him the program reads this way:

Abraham .....Christ
Sara .....the Church
Abimelech.....the enemies of the Church

After the wedding of Abraham and Sara, the beauty and holiness of the latter gives glory to the former. But their happy union is threatened by the appearance on the stage of Abimelech, and Abraham hits upon a device to save his beloved spouse. It is all very beautifully worked out, but it gives no final answer to the question of the morality involved.[7] Today, it would seem from a newer knowledge of ancient languages and customs that there was not so much a lie as a conventional reservation akin to this century's "if anyone calls, I'm out." Abraham's own defense, clearly stated in Genesis 20:12, makes more sense than any of the commentators; he tells Abimelech that Sara is indeed his sister, since they had a common father.

C. HER LAUGHTER, AND LATER DENIAL OF IT; A LIE?

How touchingly human is the picture painted for us in Genesis of this aging couple being told that theirs will be an innumerable progeny, and chuckling over the idea. Many of the Fathers found fault with Sara on this score, but at least one medieval writer makes a swift retort, telling them to read what the book says before sailing off into an uncharted sea of interpretation: "some there are who think that Isaac was called 'laughter' because of Sara, which is false. . . . it clearly says that after Abraham laughed, his son was given the name Isaac, and after that we read that Sara laughed. Read the Scriptures!"[8] This is perfectly true. In chapter

[6] *De octo dulcitii quaestionibus, Lib.* I, *quaest.* 7 (*MPL,* XL, 165); *De civitate Dei, Lib.* XVI, *cap.* 19 (*MPL,* XLI, 498).

[7] *Sermones; Serm.* IV *in Natal. Dom.* (*MPL,* CCVIII, 219-221).

[8] Rabanus Maurus, *Comment. in Genesim, Lib.* II, *cap.* 19 (*MPL,* CVII, 547-48).

seventeen occurs the dialogue with God wherein Abraham laughs and God tells him to name the child Isaac, while in chapter eighteen the visitors arrive at the tent and provoke Sara's mirth. The passage just cited may be a thrust at Augustine who firmly declares that Sara is much at fault here since "her laughter sprang from doubt, but his from pure joy."[9] An ingenious defense for her is thought up by Ambrose who calls to mind the charismatic gifts of the early Church and claims that the laughter was a species of prophetic frenzy, not an expression of incredulity; hence she could truly say after the event "I did not laugh" because she had no notion of what she had done or why she had done it.[10] But for such as claim that it was an expression of sheer exultation, Augustine tartly replies that Sara "may very well have been full of joy, but she definitely wasn't full of faith."[11]

D. HER DONATION OF AGAR; LATER TREATMENT OF AGAR; ADULTERY, CRUELTY?

This is explained in much the same manner as the "lie" to Pharaoh and Abimelech. Again, no one treats it more sanely than Ambrose. He cites custom, warns the reader against the natural tendency to impose his own morality upon the patriarchal period, and recalls to our minds that all this took place directly under the providence of God. His clinching argument is that a careful reading of the text and the characters of the story clearly reveals Abraham's unwillingness to take up with Agar, thus showing that a love for off-spring and not lust for Agar was his final motivation.[12] Augustine trenchantly phrases the same ideas this way: "accepisse, nec petiisse; accessisse, nec haesisse; seminasse, nec amasse."[13] Modern research into Babylonian and Assyrian marriage customs and the legalities of inheritance in the ancient Near East have a great and enlightening bearing on this and all allied questions in the Old Testament.[14] Since polygamy is not intrinsically evil, the

[9] *Quaestionum in heptateuchum, Lib.* I, *dist.* 36 (*MPL,* XXXIV, 558); and similarly in several other places.

[10] *De Abr., cap.* 5 (460).

[11] *De civ., Lib.* XVI, *cap.* 31 (510).

[12] *De Abr., cap.* 4 (450-54).

[13] *De civ., Lib.* XVI, *cap.* 25 (504).

[14] Cf. de Vaux, "Les patriarches hébreux et les decouvertes modernes," *Revue biblique,* LVI (1949), 20-36; also C. Gordon, "Biblical Customs and the Nuzu Tablets," *The Bibl. Archeologist,* III, 1 (Feb. 1940), 1-12.

difficulties connected with the story are largely imaginary. In this very primitive civilization such conduct was of a rather refined nature compared to Jacob's calculated cruelty towards his brother Esau (*Gen.* 25) and his deceit towards Isaac (*Gen.* 27), the vicious revenge taken by Dinah's brothers (*Gen.* 34), the incest of Ruben (*Gen.* 35), and the murderous envy of Joseph's brothers (*Gen.* 37).

Sara's subsequent treatment of Agar is a perfect example of those dissensions that render polygamy so undesirable. Woman-like, the serving girl puts on airs, and woman-like, Sara fires her out of the tent. Again Ambrose makes a sensible comment. This ejection of Agar, and the later one of Agar and Ishmael, were done under the direct inspiration of God. This is proved, he tells us, by God's promise to Abraham regarding the succession; God uses the natural and justifiable anger of Sara to effect His plans for the people of election.[15] Augustine's defense is cleverly indirect. He presumes the liceity of Sara's conduct, and then uses the event to prove that the Church must occasionally invoke the secular arm to suppress heresy. He was at first much opposed to any coercion of the Donatists, insisting that faith cannot be regimented, and that what the Church fails to do by love she will never do by fear. But he finally came to realize that co-existence, when the enemy is bent on war, is a myth. What teaches this fact more clearly than the trouble between Sara and Agar? Sara, he affirms, did not drive her handmaid out into the wilderness because she hated Agar, but because she hated Agar's pride. The two women and their sons are types of the spiritual and the carnal man. And when the mother of spiritual children is beset by carnal children she must deal firmly with them. "Being a true and worthy mother, she acts against them. Yet she does not return evil for evil—even though she feels a certain sense of hardness and bitterness—but she rather exerts her legitimate authority for the sake of good discipline. She must so act, not injuring in hate but healing in love."[16]

E. HER PREROGATIVES AND HER PRAISE; MERITED?

It has already been noted that the great prophet of the Incarnation, Isaias, speaks of Sara under the vigorous metaphor of a

[15] *De Abr., cap.* 4 (453).
[16] *Epistolarum classis* II, *Epist.* XCIII, *cap.* 2 (*MPL,* XXXIII, 324).

quarry from which is wrested the Rock of salvation. And the Apostle of the Gentiles too, lavish in his praise of Abraham, does not neglect Sara. She, he tells us, is the type of the Church of Christ, while the bond-woman Agar is the type of the Synagogue (*Gal.* 4:25). This Pauline interpretation is repeated constantly by the Fathers; and they discover many other titles to glory on the part of Sara. Ambrose, following the road pointed out by Saint Peter in his first Epistle, notes her femininity, her womanly modesty and seemly virtue, when he comments on the fact that she remained becomingly in the tent during the visit of the distinguished strangers who had brought God's message to Abraham.[17] The Doctor of Grace sees in her barrenness an image of Original Sin and the fallen race, while her fruitfulness is a figure of Redemption. "Sara, barren even in her prime . . . symbolized the nature of the human race, vitiated by sin and condemned as a just consequence of sin, deserving of no future felicity."[18] But the wonderful love of God turns this waste into a promise and a glory. Carrying this idea one step further, Isidore finds in her very emptiness, her unfruitful body, the refutation of Pelagianism: "the calling of mankind to salvation in the person of Isaac, the son of God's promise, is clearly a proof that election comes through grace, not natural powers—since he was born of an ancient father and a barren mother."[19]

In one of his most moving meditations, Bernard compares the lives of Lia and Sara, while pondering on their burial in the cave that looks out towards Mambre:

> Sara and Lia were buried in a double cave. The former, first sterile and then past child-bearing, gave birth to only one child of delight. The latter, after she had borne six sons, ceased to have children (except for a daughter who was the shame of her holy race). What a wonder is this! Here, one who has had six sons is said to have stopped bearing, and there stands the mother of only one son who is remembered as most fruitful. [Then, as is his wont, Bernard reflects on the two great divisions of service in the Church.] The active life has its definable limits and goals, while the contemplative life always goes on producing

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[17] *De Abr., cap.* 5 (458).

[18] *De civ., Lib.* XV, *cap.* 3 (440).

[19] *Quaestiones in vet. testam.; in Genesim, cap.* 13 (*MPL*, LXXXIII, 242).

more fruit. Yet both lie buried in the same field. . . . [Sara] never ceased to bear, but Lia did.[20]

Adam Scot, the Premonstratensian, an ascetic whose tender and mystical writings were great favorites in the Middle Ages, thus hails the wandering couple in the course of a remarkable apostrophe to the great figures of the Old Testament: "Peace be to you, O faithful old man, who travelled far from your fatherland and home and loved ones; leaving behind you Ur of the Chaldees, in order that your tribe might become great. And peace be to you, O Sara, who, lest you should live a death-bearing life, died a life-bearing death. Having a life with Christ hidden away in God, you were buried in the cave of contemplation"[21] (*Gen.* 23:19).

Perhaps the most forthright eulogy of Sara's faith comes from the pen of Herveus in the twelfth century. It is based on Pauline authority, and breathes the medieval flavor of open-eyed wonder and hard realism. After praising the faith of Abraham, he turns his attention to Sara. She knew that she could not have a child by natural means, any more than her husband could co-operate in its production. Yet her faith was strong.

She believed that God in his promises told the truth; she never doubted that all things are possible to Him. . . . *"Et orti sunt multi ab uno patre,"* which is certainly a marvellous fact, for if a great number of children were born of a great number of fathers, it would be of no significance whatsoever—but where so many are to be born of one parent, it is certainly most extraordinary—and from an impotent one at that, with generative organs cold and torpid. . . . And this multitude will be born of the womb of Sara, a dead womb. . . . No blood flowed; her menstrual cycle had long ceased; and even if it hadn't, she was barren anyhow. This was the situation. It was against these realities that her faith fought; and she believed that her barren and sterile womb would shelter an heir, that her aged husband would beget a son.[22]

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[20] *Meditatio in pass. et resurr. Domini, cap.* 9 (*MPL*, CLXXXIV, 755-56). Cavallera believes the *Meditation* to be non-Bernardine; the author is unknown. Cf. s.v. "Bernard—apocryphes," *Dictionaire de spiritualité*, I, 1501.

[21] *De triplici genere contemplationis, Pars* III, *dist.* 3 (*MPL*, CXCVIII, 821).

[22] *Comment. in epistolas Pauli; in epist. ad Hebr., cap.* 11 (*MPL*, CLXXXI, 1648-49).

In our own day, Father Oesterreicher comments poetically on the cycle of type and prophecy and fulfillment stretching from Sara and Isaac to Mary and Jesus. The shadowy tent of Sara becomes the cave at Bethlehem, and the miraculous conception of Isaac becomes the Incarnation. The beginning of nations and the end of nations is found in the hill country of Judea.[23]

* * * * *

Sara stands before us, from the Genesis account, not only as a superb symbol of faith and obedience, but also as an exemplar of many fine, natural, warm, and womanly qualities. One point that many seem to have overlooked in their emphasis on her faith in God is her faith in Abraham. Much like Joseph, she is told to rise and go forth into a strange land; but this happens without the angelic assurance that Joseph had. She is told by her husband. But with a similar steady tranquillity she rises and goes. Her husband abruptly leaves his home territory and begins a difficult existence halfway between hill and desert. It is a roving and a dangerous, harsh life, yet Sara quietly accompanies him with no complaint, tirelessly and humbly attending to his needs. She emerges from the Bible as "a woman masterful yet obedient, intolerant of rivalry yet capable of self-sacrifice, practical to the last degree yet possessed of those qualities of the mind which, in an age when a childless woman was often put away as a worthless thing, made her the cherished and unrivalled companion of her husband."[24] That last phrase calls to mind her finest epitaph: *"When Sara died, Abraham lamented and wept over her. And when the last rites were finished . . . he bought the field of Ephron for four hundred silver pieces . . . and so, in the double cave there that looks towards Mambre, Abraham buried his wife Sara"* (*Gen.* 23:1-3, 16, 19).

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[23] *Abraham*, 562. This is based on *De civ., Lib.* XVI, *cap.* 23-26 (500-05).

[24] H. Morton, *Women of the Bible* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1941), 27.

UNTURNED PAGES OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Here in America, although far removed in time and space, we still recall the persecution once suffered by the Church in Ireland, and we continue even now to draw inspiration from those martyr-priests of the days of Cromwell and the Penal Times. Archbishop Oliver Plunket, meeting death charitably, almost casually, in his quiet courage, has been accorded mounting admiration as his biographies multiply, but there remain as well many unsung Plunkets, and we may fondly hope that future biographies will search out those lives too nobly lived to be forgotten.

Side by side with the high heroism of those sad days are many sidelights of ecclesiastical history—sidelights of a lighter vein—which have long lain neglected. Of little concern to any but priests, none the less they incubate that human flavor of the priesthood which we keep to ourselves to help us balance the necessarily dignified seriousness of our public attitudes.

A great deal of such miscellaneous information remained unused on my desk when recently I had concluded a rather serious historical paper destined for one of the "learned journals." A number of my fellow-priests enjoyed hearing about these sidelights and thought them worthy of repetition. Hence their appearance here in the safe pages of an ecclesiastical review which can unworriedly provide them a legitimate and deserved diffusion.

Of the "kind reader" I shall have to ask charitable indulgence for the rather disjointed presentation which will characterize these pages. Since the incidents to be related could not possibly conform to any contrived mold, a certain lack of both system and sequence must be expected.

It seems incredible that the priests of those times, suffering every bitter persecution as they did—hounded by police, lacking a home to live in, existing on random crusts—could think of any amusement. But they did. Factual accounts record how at times, despite hardships and perils, they managed quite ingeniously to get together for their recreation and that one of the forms it took was a "little game" spiced—however they were able to do it—with a little wager. As perhaps often is the case, the bishop in his turn proved to be equally ingenious. Moved by a tender solici-

tude for the greatest good of the greatest number, or, if you will, more prosaically by sad personal memories, he decreed that the gifted priest winning such money would have to give it all back. Surely a monumental test of clerical obedience.[1]

From his earliest days in the ministry the priest expected and accepted danger as his way of life, and one of the most dangerous moments was the moment of return to the Irish mission after ordination on the continent. The danger one priest encountered on his return, however, was indeed a unique experience. This particular priest, Father Stephen Lower, had been the Protestant son of Protestant parents, and they anticipated welcoming home a Protestant minister. "Unbeknownst" to them, he had not only become a Catholic on the continent, but a priest as well. His father's reaction to the return of the native is thus recorded:

> Having learned from his son that instead of being a minister of Queen Elizabeth's teaching, he was a full-grown Popish Priest, and being maddened by rage, for his bigotry overcame his paternal feelings, he immediately ran for his pistol, and was with difficulty prevented from blowing out the brains of the young Levite.[2]

Another secret ordination of a quite different kind does not lack interest. This account, which may be untrue as no sustaining documents can be found in the archives of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, portends to describe an ordination of candidates for the priesthood who were suspect of Jansenism; the ordination being performed by Dr. Luke Fagan in Meath. "He, however, required a solemn promise from each of the candidates that they would never reveal the circumstances of their ordination during his life." Yet in spite of all precautions, Rome allegedly heard rumors that some Irish bishop had held such an ordination, and, in consequence, directed the Archbishop of Dublin, to which post Dr. Fagan had been recently promoted, to discover who the bishop was. Accordingly, Dr. Fagan swung into action. "He convoked the Irish bishops, put the question to each of them individually, and returned for answer that, after examination, he was persuaded that none of the bishops of whom he had inquired had held any such ordination."[3]

[1] Cf. *Vita Kirwini*, p. 51.
[2] *Ossory Society Transactions*, I, 225.
[3] Neale, *History of Jansenist Church*, p. 236.

For the priests of Penal Times just to supply their people with the bare essentials of their religion, the Mass and the sacraments, involved great risk, but a number of them willingly accepted still further risks by teaching in the famous Hedge Schools. Here, we might maintain, lies an authentic historical precedent for the current trend bringing parish priests to the teaching staffs of various high schools. While no doubt this zeal of a past era is inspiring, I think it improbable that many will be moved to emulate Fr. John Garrigan of Moybolge who "taught Latin in a corner of that church at the age of eight."[4] Perhaps more likely to receive emulation is another teacher. This priest-teacher, after being ferreted out by the government police, was discovered to be keeping two guns in his classroom. However, to use such artificial means, while not without evident practical advantages, is not quite playing the game.[5]

Today, schools devoted to ecclesiastical training, equipped as they are with every educational device, afford the greatest consolation to the Church, but seminaries of this sort were not possible during the times of which we write. In consequence, the priests' schooling did not always satisfy certain members of the hierarchy. It is no surprise, therefore, to find in reports forwarded to Rome that the Vicar General of Raphoe lamented the lack of learning in those of his clerics who had been educated only at home. He made plain his desire for priests trained on the continent. His views were by no means unusual, but quite unusual indeed is his description of his one priest who had studied abroad: "ille unus quamvis Lovanii studuerit, species non bene colligit et ejus cerebrum videtur aliquatenus laesum."[6] Certainly, such phraseology would never be employed in the twentieth century.

Our modern seminaries rejoice in large faculties and the individual teaching burden is wisely limited to permit needed research. The Irish seminary professor of the seventeenth century presented quite a contrast; he held, to borrow Oliver Wendell Holmes' description of his duties at the Harvard Medical School, a "sofa" rather than a "chair of learning."

[4] O'Connell, *Schools of Brieffne*, p. 263.
[5] Cf. *Archivum hibernicum*, III, 127.
[6] *Spicilegium ossoriense*, II, 214.

One of the fathers instructs, for an hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon, the ecclesiastics in cases of morality, as also in the manner of preaching and catechizing; the same father teaches the rhetoricians for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening; on the feast days and vacations he teaches the ceremonies and the manner of administering the sacraments, etc.[7]

One cannot help but wonder what was covered by the "etc."

A Papal Brief provides us with a final educational sidelight. It authorized the fishermen of Seville, Spain, to fish on six Sundays to help support the Irish college there; a singular instance among the many Papal efforts to aid Irish education.[8]

If virtue has its own reward, the heroic stature required of the Irish priests deserved specially generous rewards, which we may confidently hope they now enjoy in heaven. Rewards on the temporal level were few. One reward, however, they had in profusion: namely, pastorates. Some priests ordained only a few years shepherded as many as seven parishes, an arrangement necessitated by the emergency conditions arising from religious persecution.

Necessity bred other strange customs, too: bination, even trination, for funerals. Under pressures of persecution the funeral had to be carried out amidst conditions of secrecy, and almost of conspiracy, which affected the rite itself: the mass was offered in a private home with the only possible altar quite literally a *mensa;* the corpse was placed under the table used as altar, and, in the case of a priest's funeral, actually on top of it. Quite understandably, diocesan synods mirror the concern of ecclesiastical authorities over such liturgical or unliturgical arrangements.[9]

While few ecclesiastical rewards were to be had, the other side of the coin was that not much could be inflicted by way of ecclesiastical punishments, and periodically discipline would grow somewhat careless. One trump card held by any unscrupulous local pastor or ecclesiastical subordinate was a piece of civil legislation known as *Praemunire.*[10] This statute forbade the exercise of any foreign

[7] Oliver Plunket to Propaganda, April 26, 1671.
[8] Cf. Pastor, *Lives . . .*, XXVI, 216.
[9] Cf. *Irish Historical Documents,* III 30.
[10] Cf. Moran, *Oliver Plunket,* p. 308.

jurisdiction. The culprit could simply get in touch with the civil power, explain that disciplinary action was about to take place against him, and—whisk—the bishop would spend that night, and more than a few others, amidst the very real discomforts of a seventeenth-century jail. It is a fact that this did take place, although most rarely.

It might be added that one of the strange things about Tudor and Stuart jails was the ease with which visitors to the prisoners came and went. Should the rebellious priest, finally moved to compunction at the bishop's plight, wish to exercise the temporal works of mercy, he could visit him quite regularly to express an interest as to how he was getting on in his new environment.

Ascetical writers warn us most plainly about the hazards which lie in wait for any cleric who would adventurously put aside his ecclesiastical garb. Our Irish confreres of years ago had no choice; ecclesiastical garb was forbidden. In addition, they were forced quite often to go about in deliberate disguise, with the result that some of the situations in which they involved themselves were even stranger than the disguises—take the following account.

A certain priest, who had been kept in prison for many months, one day disguised himself in a fashion that fooled his jailers, and then managed to escape. Because in prison he had been subjected to grave mistreatment, he was not able to go very far before he collapsed on the roadside, where a kindly young Protestant couple found him half-dead. The couple were completely ignorant of his identity, a point on which he could not prudently enlighten them, for such a disclosure might well ensure his return to prison. It took them quite a while to nurse him back to health, and, no sooner was this accomplished, than the husband himself lapsed into a long illness during which the disguised priest was compelled by charity to do in turn what he could to help his helper. Finally, the husband died, but not before using his last breath to beg his unknown guest to look after the widow. This the widow not only agreed to, but seconded with an enthusiasm rather ill-suited to the situation. Perhaps still weak from sickness and weighed down by gratitude, the priest momentarily agreed. Moved by grace, however, he soon revealed his true identity, explained the nature of the priesthood, and departed.

A kindred predicament arose from another tactic of persecution—exiling priests after their capture. Ruthlessly simple, this consisted of forcing the priests aboard ship and transporting them under duress to the Barbadoes Islands. Many of the priests escaped because friendly ship captains, after sailing out a safe distance from port, would have a small boat lowered to bring the priests back under cover of darkness. Next morning they would be back again saying Mass as usual for their flocks. A few priests were so fortunate that, for them, this whole process practically followed a cycle; so exactly so, as almost to premise a regular boat schedule.

The case in question concerns a priest not so fortunate. He had no opportunity to escape, and, following many days at sea, the vessel suffered shipwreck. After being rescued by strangers, our ecclesiastical Sinbad found himself at the court of the Sultan. There, he was at first simply a slave serving in the court, but gradually the Sultan grew to like him and raised him to increasingly high positions. The priest often conversed with the ruler and his courtiers about the glories of the Christian religion, but, as far as the Sultan himself was concerned, all conversion efforts failed. Yet, in time, the involuntary missionary to the court became his most valued friend. As a token of that friendship, the Sultan one day offered him his daughter in marriage, which included—"according to the custom of the country"—a sizeable harem. A firm refusal was the only answer the Sultan could obtain. None the less, he took it kindly enough and, with a sad heart, at length permitted the priest to return to what might be considered, under the circumstances, the comparatively easy apostolate of Ireland.[11]

The next *curiositas* "is almost unknown in published histories of this period and yet few events attracted more attention for many years . . . the imposture . . . devised can scarcely find a parallel in the ecclesiastical annals of any country."[12]

This may serve to introduce us to a certain Father Taafe, whose place in history derives from his having forged a Bull from the Holy See which empowered him to act as Vicar Apostolic of all Ireland and depose any priest or bishop he deemed to be in need

[11] O'Heyne, *Epilogus chronologicus,* has both accounts.
[12] Moran, *Oliver Plunket,* p. 29.

of deposition. At first some suspicion attached to his mission. Then he deposed the Vicar-General of Derry, Terrence O'Kelly, and such was the intense and widespread dislike of that clergyman, everyone immediately believed that the forged Bull was authentic. Even the conservative Cardinal Moran writes, "So just was this sentence, that many were induced to admit as genuine the authority from which it proceeded. . . ." Thus encouraged, Father Taafe had copies made of the Bull and sent agents, so equipped, to all of the parishes. "He has commanded all his Visitators to exact twenty *scudi* from each Vicar-General, and four *scudi* from each Parish-Priest; and he commanded that in case of poverty, and of their not being able to pay this sum, they should on three successive Sundays, *inter Missarum Solemnia,* ask it as alms from the people."[13]

His moment of triumph did not last long, as effective proof discrediting him was soon gathered and publicized throughout the Church. "*L'affaire* Taafe" did not end entirely, though, until the Archives of Propaganda had a very full file of episcopal correspondence struggling hopelessly through the lamest explanations of how it all happened.[14]

"Cloak and dagger" history could fittingly label much history of the centuries we have been concerned with. Pseudonyms were scattered throughout ecclesiastical correspondence—many correspondents themselves employing two or three of them. In some exchanges this so marked the writing that the student finds himself hard-pressed to keep track of who is writing to whom about whom. Letters between the Brussels Internuncio ("cui res Hiberniae incumbunt") and the Archbishop of Armagh, for example, show each of them frequently using pseudonyms in addition to a cipher. At times the procedure by which letters were forwarded utilized as many as four intermediaries. Yet such precautions still failed to stave off constant interception. Many letters thus opened were sent on resealed, while copies of them were simultaneously making the rounds of the various government agents. No wonder Bishop Brenan sometimes omitted any signature; he simply wrote "My handwriting is sufficiently known."

[13] The Bishop of Ardagh to Patrick Plunket, Oct. 19, 1668.
[14] Cf. *Spicilegium ossoriense,* II, *passim.*

Some good, oddly enough, did come out of one series of interceptions. In this fashion the Lord Lieutenant, Berkeley, read a great many of the letters of Archbishop Oliver Plunket. So pleased was he with the nice things written about him, he called the archbishop to the castle and told him so. Of all the Viceroys, probably no one was better disposed to the Catholics and treated them more decently than did Berkeley, and there seems no doubt that an important factor in his benign attitude was this friendship, which in turn, at least drew strength from the stolen correspondence.

Ecclesiastical correspondence must of necessity be concerned from time to time with appointments to be made to various positions in the Church. That concern, when found in seventeenth-century Irish correspondence, is, therefore, to be expected. None the less, the letters soliciting the appointment of Peter Talbot to the See of Dublin, have this interest—they may entitle him to the distinction of being the most recommended candidate in history. His candidacy was promoted by King Charles II and the Queen Dowager, the Spanish Ambassador, the French King and the French Nuncio, the Brussels Internuncio, and by a great many other personages nearly as important. He received the appointment.

It is surprising to find that at the same time all this spying and persecution was taking place, somehow negotiations between Church and State managed likewise to go on. Jerome de Vecchiis, the Vatican spokesman, and Peter Walsh, the government representative, were holding secret meetings in England in search of some possible *rapproachement*. The meetings were generally rather dramatic and mysterious, but occasionally they offered an amusing note. The Holy See suspected Walsh of espionage and apostasy, and so at one point during a particular nocturnal meeting, Walsh raised the question of this suspicion. Walsh heatedly took the tack that the Roman Pontiff had been outrageously misinformed about him and his activities. Replied de Vecchiis stonily, *"Ego, informavi."*[15]

Another rebuff came to Father Walsh in a highly dramatic fashion. Working craftily with the anti-Catholic Ormond, who was then Lord Lieutenant, Walsh convened a meeting of all the important ecclesiastics at Dublin in the shadow of the might of the civil power. He aimed at getting them to sign the Remon-

[15] Bagwell, *Stuarts*, III, 58.

strance, a subtle statement of loyalty to the Crown which betrayed the rights of the Church. On the eve of the second day of the meeting, the Primate of Ireland, Edmund O'Reilly, who had been granted a safe conduct by the government, arrived from Rome. Seeing his arrival, the government schemers rejoiced at having secured the ranking prelate of the Irish Church to lend the official note to their anticipated success. The clerical leaders, for their part, experienced a relief from the feeling of queasiness that had hitherto troubled their participation in a venture they could not quite penetrate. Hence, a warm, enthusiastic reception awaited the Primate. It subsided, however, when he went directly to Walsh's room, drew forth a letter concealed in his cloak, identified the writer of it as Cardinal Rospigliosi, the Prefect of Propaganda, and then quietly read the words stigmatizing Walsh as an apostate and his followers as a nefarious few. Needless to say, the Remonstrance failed.[16]

These have been some of the sidelights of past ecclesiastical history, their context, of hardship unto blood matched by heroism unto martyrdom, etching still more sharply the delightful lighter vein. No Catholic historian need fear to look history fair in the face: being shocked easily bears witness only to our historical immaturity; isolated items of idiosyncrasy and rare episodes of scandal become meaningless amidst the routine of glory.

Though truly these priests of long ago *"gigantes erant,"* they none the less held close to the small and the amusing. How sound their recognition of the need for recreation, how salutary their willingness to smile. That they lived well with the incongruous chance of life, betokened their detachment and humility. Had it been otherwise, their attractive *humanitas* would have escaped us; an integral part of the wonderful whole would be lost. Perhaps we could not explain it, but somehow we would feel it.

We ourselves may learn wise counsel here, when, in our own turn, we must sometimes face the scandalous and the idiosyncratic. The modern-day priest, aboard the confusing merry-go-round of twentieth-century existence, can use a good sense of humor; it prompts and protects a full-dimensioned spiritual life. He can use, too, the same holy sense of balance; it wisely waits till opportune zeal can move with prudence and charity to effect good. These

[16] Cf. Walsh, *History of the Remonstrance.*

unturned pages, although but lighter sidelights, teach us a weighty lesson, "äequam servare fidem rebus in arduis, in prosperis et adversis."[17]

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[17] Oliver Plunket to Propaganda, Sept. 29, 1671.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The leading article in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for December, 1906, from the pen of the Rev. T. Mahon, of England, is entitled "Blessed Thomas More and Shakespeare," and proposes an interesting theory regarding the connection between a work by St. Thomas More, "The History of King Richard the Third," and Shakespeare's drama "The Tragedy of King Richard the Third." Father Mahon presents a considerable number of passages from both works to establish a resemblance, and concludes that Shakespeare must have made use of the historical treatise composed by the saintly martyr almost a century before Shakespeare wrote his play. His conclusion is that "the poet has not only followed our first great prose-writer in his argument, but has also used his coined phrases and repeated More's imagery, although transmuting it into poetic gold in the crucible of genius." . . . Bishop Maes, of Covington, writing on "Altar Breads and Wheaten Flour," emphasizes the great care that priests should take to procure pure wheaten bread for the Holy Eucharist. He deplores some customs which he claims are prevalent among European merchants in the matter of adulterating flour, even with sawdust and pulverized stone. Conditions are better in America, the Bishop states, yet for the sake of safety he recommends that the flour to be used for altar breads be prepared specially under the direction of reliable persons, such as a group of religious. (In the United States at the present time our pure food laws provide sufficient assurance that what is advertised by a reliable firm as pure wheat flour may be used for the eucharistic consecration without any hesitation.) . . . Fr. James E. Cassidy discusses the advantages and disadvantages of a diocesan insurance company. He himself favors the plan. . . . Father Benson's novel, *A Mirror of Shalott,* comes to its conclusion in this issue. . . . In the Studies and Conferences section we find a plea for a foreign mission seminary in the United States. . . . A correspondent pleads for clearer enunciation by the singers in our church choirs.

F. J. C.

A WALDENSIAN VIEW ON THE VIRGIN MARY

In 1950 the Waldensian Church in Italy published a book on our Lady by Professor Giovanni Miegge, entitled *La Vergine Maria —saggio di storia del dogma (The Virgin Mary—a Critical Essay in the History of Dogma)*. Professor Miegge has been a pastor of the Waldensian Church since 1924; in 1952 he was named Professor of the New Testament at the Waldensian theological seminary in Rome. His other writings include a study on Luther, and translations from modern Protestant theologians, e.g. Karl Barth.

A characteristic of Waldensian theology for many centuries has been its acceptance of Protestant doctrine. Professor Miegge's *La Vergine Maria* has just appeared in an English translation: *The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine.*[1] The advertising used in promoting this book makes no mistake in stressing its Protestant outlook, although Professor Miegge is perhaps less rigidly Protestant in some respects than might appear from Dr. Waldo Smith's amazing translation.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The translation is marked "revised by the author for this English edition" (p. 2), but the revisions are very few, consisting mainly in the omission of several allusions of particular Italian interest, and in the addition of three pages referring to the definition of the Assumption, which had not yet taken place when the original Italian edition was printed. When I first read *The Virgin Mary* I put many question marks in the borders concerning the translation; on obtaining a copy of the Italian original I compared the two page for page and found that my question marks were far too few. This is not a question of mere typographical errors, or legiti-

[1] *The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine,* by Giovanni Miegge, translated by Waldo Smith, foreword by John A. Mackay (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 196. The same book, with the same pagination, was published in identical editions in 1955 both in England (London: Lutterworth Press) and in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press); in this British-Canadian edition the foreword is by Nathaniel Micklem.

mately different ways of putting an Italian expression into English. The very meaning is missed time and again.

Professor Miegge's book deserves the serious attention it received when it first appeared in Italy. It is a respectful attempt to appraise Catholic teaching about the Mother of Jesus, and even though it sometimes caricatures Catholic belief it would be wrong to consider this as wilful misrepresentation. The translation, however, does little credit to Dr. Waldo Smith and the associates whose help he mentions. One also wonders at the knowledge of English of the original author when he reads, "Professor Miegge had read the translation chapter by chapter."

Important theological terms, usually used quite correctly by Professor Miegge himself, sometimes end up as nonsense in English, or even outrightly contradict the author's Italian. Such inaccurate work is surprising from publishing houses of the stature of Lutterworth Press, London, which published the British edition, and the well-known Presbyterian house, the Westminster Press, Philadelphia, which published the United States edition.

In the course of this extended notice on *The Virgin Mary* first consideration will be given to Professor Miegge's basic propositions; where needed, attention will be called to defects in the translation.

GOAL OF MIEGGE'S BOOK

Within the space of an article no attempt can be made to take up all the difficulties raised in *The Virgin Mary*. It would require a set of volumes to deal with all the points of comparison between Protestant and Catholic, for, as the author well notes, the position of the Virgin Mary in Catholic doctrine and devotion is intimately united with the whole structure of Catholicism. What is the general direction of Miegge's "critical study"? An introductory section defines "the problem" of Marian piety in the Catholic Church. The author says that "the present development of mariology . . . has deeper roots that cannot be identified without penetrating into the most intimate recesses of the Catholic faith" (p. 16). To Miegge this development seems to overshadow the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, so much so that it must be asked, "By what fatality, historical and spiritual, has Mary become the *necessary mediatrix* of Jesus?" (p. 18, italics mine).

The author's stated intention is "to limit oneself to the problem's historical and dogmatic aspect," leaving aside liturgical considerations (p. 18). He eschews the use of curiosities or scandals (p. 19), and remains very faithful to his word. He hopes rather "to discuss among Christians a problem that however grave should not be insoluble, and for a solution, must be treated with respect" (p. 19).

Professor Miegge also sets for himself the general rule of refraining from "the attractive but uncertain and elusive [this may be a typographical error for the original Italian *delusivo-delusive*] ground of the comparative history of religions" (p. 16). Unfortunately, the attraction sometimes proves too great for the author; even in the introductory statement of the problem it is noted "as certain, and indeed as obvious, that the cult of Mary has replaced that of the divine mothers of the Mediterranean world" (p. 18). In his explanation of the causes and effects of this replacement he does not completely escape the snare of solving too much by naturalistic explanations. Another explanation of Marian piety hinted at in the introductory chapter is the fourth-century emphasis on asceticism—"an original phenomenon, even though far removed from the ideas of New Testament Christianity" (p. 19). In the concluding chapter (p. 185) it will be stated quite explicitly that these two elements—the sublimation of sex, and the human nostalgia for maternal protection—are the leading psychological motives in the elaboration of Marian piety.

The greatest worth of Professor Miegge's book is the clarity with which he points out the basic differences between the Catholic and Protestant concepts of Christianity. In ecumenical matters clarity is true charity, for vagueness about doctrinal differences is not a step towards Christian unity. Miegge's book shows that the hoped-for *rapprochement* between the churches must take place on ground still more fundamental than Marian doctrine and devotion. Dr. Smith writes in his translator's preface: "A regrettable side to the current mariology is its injury to Christian unity. It is widening the rift between Roman Catholics and Protestants" (p. 13). And Dr. Smith impugns the motives of even the Orthodox Church and certain sectors of the Anglo-Catholic Church insofar as they too favor a Marian cult he considers far removed from the scriptures and the early church. Miegge voices a less severe criticism of the Orthodox and Anglo-Catholic elements, but definitely labels Marian

doctrine and devotion a stumbling block in the path of Christian unity:

> The Catholic mariologists . . . must . . . know that the Marian piety, far from being a pure pedagogical transcription of authentic Christian values constitutes their dilution with a reality sentimental and psychological, respectable to be sure, but typically profane, exclusively human and not religious. Can they hope that by this vehicle, so debatable, a true Christian renaissance can be produced? Or perhaps the values of Christianity are so devitalized for them that they are no longer distinguishable from the pure humanity of the mariological values? This problem is of disconcerting gravity for the future of Christianity (p. 185).

HEART OF THE PROBLEM

Professor Miegge comes to the real heart of his problem in opposing the Catholic notion of Mary as model and symbol of the Church:

> The conception of the Church that comes to be symbolized in the Virgin Mary is typically the Catholic conception. . . . It is clearly too much to hope that the interpretation of Mary as symbol of the Church can become the meeting ground of a common appreciation of Mary by Catholics and Protestants (p. 177).

To sum up, the Church the body of Christ, pledged with Him in a work of missionary conquest of the world: Yes! The Church co-redemptress in the sense of a collaboration of the human with the divine in the world's redemption. No! Father Nicholas was quite right when he pointed out that the co-redemption of Mary and of the Church is the critical point that separates Catholicism and Protestantism (p. 176).[2]

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[2] Miegge is referring to Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O.P., "La doctrine de la corédemption dans le cadre de la théologie générale de la rédemption," in *Marie Corédemptrice* (Lyon, 1948), pp. 105-129, the proceedings of the fifth national French Marian congress held at Grenoble-LaSalette, 1946. Further references on Protestant views of Mary are: Paul F. Palmer, S.J., "Mary in Protestant Theology and Worship," *Theological Studies,* XV (Dec. 1954), 519-40, reprinted as a 32-page Marian Library Study No. 3, Dayton, Ohio, 1955; Kenneth F. Dougherty, S.A., "Contemporary American Protestant Attitudes Toward the Divine Maternity," in *Marian Studies* VI (1955), 137-63; G. Weigel, S.J., "A Survey of Protestant Theology in Our Day," in *Proceedings of the 8th Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America, Baltimore, Md., 1953,* pp. 44 ff.; Jerome Hamer, O.P., "Protestants and the Marian Doctrine," in *The Thomist,* XVIII (Oct. 1955), 480-502.

Miegge willingly concedes a certain value to the theme of Mary as a symbol of the Church. There is a favorable attitude to this notion on the part of some Protestants, he reports, but he adds the qualification: "first it must be made clear that the Protestants who are interested in these ideas mean Mary as a pure symbol of the Church, a symbol certainly not without reality to the extent that Mary is part of the Church!" [the exclamation point is not mine; the Italian reads however: "in quanto Maria fa parte . . ."—"insofar as Mary is part of the Church"]. Miegge refers to some of the sermons of Karl Barth. Barth has phrased what Miegge seems to mean with greater precision:

> It is in Marian doctrine and the Marian cult that the heresy of the Roman Catholic Church is apparent—that heresy which enables us to understand all the rest. The "Mother of God" of Roman Catholic dogma is, quite simply, the principle, the proto-type and summing-up of the human creature cooperating in its own salvation by making use of the prevenient grace; as such, she is also the principle, proto-type and summing-up of the Church. . . . Thus, that Church in which there is a cult of Mary *must* be itself understood as at the Vatican Council; is of necessity that Church of man who, by virtue of grace, cooperates with grace.[3]

Miegge's protest is not against simply honoring the Virgin Mary. He is willing to give her considerable honor. He speaks of Mary as "not only a witness, but the chosen instrument of the incarnation" (p. 35). He grants the truth contained in the title "Mother of God" *(theotokos),* although he sees dangers in that title. Even Dr. John A. Mackay, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, author of the foreword to the United States edition of *The Virgin Mary,* pays honor to Mary: "Let Mary continue to be 'blessed among women,' the greatest and most honored woman who ever lived" (p. 8).[4]

[3] Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik,* 1938, I, 2, pp. 157 and 160, as quoted in Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Splendour of the Church,* trans. by Michael Mason (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p. 239, in the chapter on "The Church and Our Lady," pp. 238 ff.

[4] Dr. Mackay was the author of the statement unanimously approved at the 167th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., held in Los Angeles, May, 1956; this statement on "the Marian cult" accused the Catholic Church of substituting Mary in place of Christ, a charge Mackay repeats in his foreword, and which is substantially the same as

Miegge's essential protest goes deeper than Catholic belief about our Lady. He admits this: "The present development of mariology is not to be interpreted solely as a resort to the most potent instrument of doctrinal diffusion. It has deeper roots that cannot be identified without penetrating into the most intimate recesses of the Catholic faith" (p. 16).

For a Catholic the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ on earth, a body the members of which share in the supernatural life of the Head, the God-Man. Miegge finds this Catholic doctrine incompatible with the classical Protestant notion of the Church as a society of believers, and of salvation as an external imputation of the merits of Christ. That which divides Protestant and Catholic concerns the very nature of the Church—not merely its external form, but even more its internal life. What is at stake is the whole teaching on the Mystical Body, and the realization of the redemptive work perfected on Calvary through individual man's free response to the gift of God's grace.

GRACE AND MERIT

For Miegge the Catholic concept of grace is unacceptable. He sees the idea of merit as no more than a rigid juridical system developed in the Church under the influence of Roman and feudal social patterns. Hence Christ came to be thought of either as the severe judge, or inversely as the crucified one, humiliated almost to the vanishing point of his humanity; in either case he became a Christ far removed from ordinary human beings. In its reaction to the Reformation Catholicism "refused to adhere to this rediscovery of the Christ of compassion" and instead fixed more firmly at Trent the juridical system of salvation. Marian piety thus came to fill man's need for a more direct way to God—a detour around "the barrier of medieval theology, a barrier conceptual, ritualistic, disciplinary and sacramental" (p. 152). Marian piety means "on one side a divinity all severity and justice: and on the other a com-

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Dr. Miegge's thesis. The members of the Catholic Theological Society of America at their June, 1955, meeting in New York City passed a resolution of regret and sorrow at the distortion of Catholic devotion to Mary contained in the Presbyterian pronouncement. Cf. "Statement on Catholic Devotion to Mary," in *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, p. 308.

passion that is all human and without justice" (p. 152-53). For Professor Miegge, grace, which he occasionally mentions but never defines, is obviously only a merely juridical entity, conferring some right to eternal life; it is not a physical reality, not a created participation in the divine nature, not a new life-principle. The notion of merit, and the familiar distinction *de condigno* and *de congruo* are handled by Miegge with a discouraging lack of exactness, and by his translator with simple incomprehension.[5]

"Luther," writes Miegge, "recovered the Gospel of the pure mercy of God in Christ, the Gospel of grace without merit and beyond merit. With this, without polemics or attacks, he dissipated the doctrine of Mary's mediating mercy in the new evangelical faith, and made it impossible, impossible because superfluous" (p. 144).

Invoking the Pauline text, *I Tim.* 2:5, Miegge comments: "It can leave the mariologists undisturbed who say they do not affirm a mediation of Mary on the same plane as Jesus but only in a subordinate way but it is certain that the apostle does not contemplate any co-redemption of any degree by the mother of Christ" (p. 163). A footnote to this opinion quotes a Catholic author, elsewhere saluted by Miegge ("a competent scholar like Dillenschneider," p. 165): "It [the Pauline text] could embarrass us only if we were maintaining for Mary a co-redemption either complementary to that of Christ, or independent of it." Of Dillenschneider's explanation the author's comment is: "Evidently all

[5] A non-Catholic reading *The Virgin Mary* in the hope of learning something of Mary's place in the Catholic teaching on grace and merit can only reap confusion. Here are some examples: "... the only sphere of theology and of Catholic devotion in which it is possible to speak of a truly free grace, a grace that is not paid for by some 'suitable' merit [the Italian reads: "la ricompensa di un merito *de congruo*"—the recompense of merit *de congruo*] but is given to unworthy sinners, is the sphere of Marian piety" (pp. 151-52); "... the Catholic theology of the period since the Council of Trent, with its rigid definition of the collaboration of human liberty with divine grace—in antithesis to the *'sola gratia'* of the Reformation—and with the human capacity to deserve *de congruo,* and with appropriate acquiescence [Italian has: "con la propria acquiescenza"—with one's own consent], the grace that saves" (p. 162); "... the mariologists of the end of the nineteenth century and of the twentieth century . . . sheltered by the comfortable distinction between merit *de congruo* and *de condigno,* dare the affirmation of a co-redemptress in the proper sense of the term, as, for example, Roschini does" (p. 167).

the theological difficulties are solved with theological distinctions." The remark is unfair, for Miegge himself, as he demonstrates in his chapter "The Mother of God," is well aware of the need and importance of theological distinctions.

MARY IN THE GOSPELS

The narratives of the Annunciation and birth of Christ are carefully and respectfully treated. It is clearly stated that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. Our Lady's *Magnificat* is called an expression of the purest tradition of Israel. Nor would any Catholic take exception to the statement that Mary plays in the Incarnation "the subordinate role of the chosen instrument and faithful witness of the great event" (p. 31). In speaking of the Apostles' Creed, Miegge offers some thoughts on the theme of Mary's witness:

> Mary and Pilate! The two pillars on which stands the affirmation of the real historicity of Christ, truly born in a human body at a definite point in history, and truly crucified in that body at an equally definite point in time. Mary and Pilate, the two witnesses of the humanity of the Saviour, that is of the reality of the incarnation (p. 37).

Yet Miegge cannot see any merit on Mary's part in her consent; for him it was not that free consent which Catholics see in the scriptural account of the Annunciation. Miegge takes a very definite stand on this point; indeed it is literally a cardinal point, for a great deal hinges on this interpretation:

> In the Gospel story the annunciation is simply an annunciation, the communication of a sovereign decision that is extremely honorable for Mary—"Blessed art thou among women"—but concerning which she can clearly act only in humble submission, as indeed she does, and without her obedience being invested by her with the least quality of merit. Already in her person the redemption of the world is entirely and exclusively the majestic work of Him who saves (p. 162).

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

Professor Miegge also takes up the "hard saying" recorded by Mark (3: 31-35) and the other synoptics, "Who are my mother and my brethren, etc.?" Of the incident in the earlier part of the same chapter in Mark when "his own people . . . went out to lay hold on him" Miegge comments: "One would like to know what part Mary had in this unhappy incident. That she was present

along *with her sons* is explicitly stated by verse 31 . . . one would prefer to be able to think that Mary did not take part in this intervention of the 'relations of Jesus'" (p. 24—italics mine).

As the author admits in another place, the Gospels do not decide the identity of the brethren of Jesus. The presence of Mary is expressly stated in Mark 3 : 31 ; but "with her sons" is by no means stated; it is rather Professor Miegge's interpretation, and it goes counter to the almost unanimous opinion of the early Christian writers who discuss this point. Tertullian's denial of Mary's perpetual virginity was condemned as contrary to tradition by the Fathers who came after him.[6] The theme of the virginity is continued in chapter two, titled in English "The Eternal Virgin" (for the Italian "La sempre Vergine"—which means "ever-Virgin"). Professor Miegge presses his interpretation of the "other sons": ". . . one who reads the Gospel accounts without dogmatic preoccupation finds no reason for trying to avoid the natural sense of the texts, according to which Jesus had by Mary four brothers and some sisters. Indeed he will find it almost psychologically impossible to interpret them differently" (pp. 42-43).

Chapter two also discusses the second-century Gnostic fantasies about Christ and Mary. According to some docetic forms of Gnosticism Christ had only an apparent body; the corollary, of course, was that Mary was not the physical mother of Christ. The Church's anti-docetist reaction, which Miegge describes, was vigorous—the ancient creeds stress the humanity of Christ—"born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate." Our Lady's virginity *in partu* is a defined truth in the Church, and is explicit common teaching at least since the end of the fourth century. One factor in the relatively late stress on this truth was precisely the danger that it would be misinterpreted in prejudice to the reality of

[6] Cf. *Marian Studies* VII (1956), entirely on Mary's virginity, especially the articles: E. Carroll, O.Carm., "Our Lady's Virginity *post partum*," pp. 69-102, and Gerard Owens, C.SS.R., "Our Lady's Virginity in the Birth of Jesus," pp. 43-68; cf. also Alex. Jones, "Reflections on a Recent Dispute," *Scripture* VIII (Jan. 1956), 16-23, where Jones takes as his starting point the storm aroused by Easter week 1955 British Television presentation of *Family Portrait*, picturing other children of Mary, but Jones carries his reflections beyond that point to discuss the divergent attitudes of Catholic and Protestant towards the Word of God.

Christ's body. One wonders therefore in what sense Miegge writes: "The virginity of Mary in the bringing forth was the legitimate consequence of these [Docetist] speculations, although it [virginity *in partu*] was not one in the strict sense" (p. 36).

In Miegge's view it is "logically contradictory" to say Christ was truly human and yet that Mary remained a virgin in giving birth to him. He attributes the development of the doctrine to a "docetic sensibility" (p. 46) and to "the ascetic interest" (p. 44) on the Church's part. But the true explanation of the Church's defense of virginity *in partu* was the Church's own awareness that this was part of the full revelation of Mary's virginity.

That Mary remained a virgin all her life after the birth of Christ is also the teaching of the Church which sees Mary's life-long gift of herself to her Son and God by perfect integrity of body as well as by complete surrender of will as part of the complete mystery of her virginal dedication. The Christian sense of Mary's virginity is that of exclusive "concern with the Lord's claim" (*I Cor.* 7: 32). The present Pope's encyclical letter *Sacra virginitas,* reaffirms this:

> This is the clear teaching of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church—chastity is no Christian virtue unless we embrace it "for love of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19, 12). . . . If priests and religious, and all who are in any way consecrated to the service of God, observe perfect chastity, they do so simply because their divine Master remained a virgin for the duration of His life on earth.[7]

To speak, as Professor Miegge does, of the Church's keeping "sexual Manichaeism at least as a theory and monastic ideal of perfection" (p. 123) is to forget that the Church sees in the sacrament of marriage not only a natural good, but a symbol of the unity of Christ and his Church. Were Miegge's study not so respectful an effort to present Mariology as it appears to the Protestant, this writer would protest even more strongly against such statements as: "Mary is the sublime projection of their [i.e. the ascetics] intimate labors, the goal of their ambits, of their repressions which are the more beloved, the more they are grievous" (p. 184). (The translation limps a bit, but enough of the sense of the original Italian survives to indicate the idea, cf. Italian, p. 212.)

[7] *A. A. S.,* XLVI (May 16, 1954), 161-91; English translation, *Holy Virginity* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1954), nn. 11, 17.

The Church is said to have "mitigated naturalistically the conception of original sin . . . but it has maintained on the other hand the sexual Manichaeism, at least as a theory and monastic ideal of perfection" (pp. 122-23). On the other hand, "the Reformation was to separate sex from sin, in the conception of original sin . . . confirming again at the same time the tragic vision of life which was its profound and human value" (p. 122). Miegge writes: "Mary's humanity should be considered much less as a representation of the ideal humanity than as that of the ascetic ideal of Christianity" (p. 184).

Pace Saint Paul!

The interests of doctrinal truth do not permit the following sentence to go unchallenged:

> The exceptional importance in the worship of Mary, which all the representations connected with human generation assume, the inquietude with which it feels compelled to make precise every particular of her conception, birth, maternity and perpetual virginity are eloquent symbols of all that. If there is a figure charged with psychological complexes, with the projection of repressed impulses, it is the Virgin Mary (p. 184).

Has Professor Miegge taken as his standard the merely psychological theories of Christian doctrine? The quotation just given does not ring true with other statements in the same book. *The Virgin Mary* gives in fact a fairly detailed doctrinal history which makes it quite clear that the Immaculate Conception is a spiritual matter—Mary's preservation from original sin at the moment her soul was infused into her body. And the maternity, in the sense that Mary is Mother of Christ, is part and parcel of the doctrine that God himself became man in her virginal womb—a truth strenuously defended by Miegge.

MOTHER OF GOD

The chapter given to the theme "Mother of God" (chapter three) is an extremely important one. There is real cause for gratitude in this open profession of belief in Christ's Godhead and in Mary's true motherhood of the God-Man. Here is a true meeting-point for Christians. Professor Miegge shows that the title "Mother of God" *(theotokos)* as it was defined at Ephesus and Chalcedon is completely orthodox, and safeguards the central truth that "God

in Christ is made man in such a precise and realistic sense that Mary can be called His mother" (p. 53). The author is quite right in saying that the discussion "vital to the faith" about the term *theotokos* was essentially a question of Christology.

In the involved discussion about the Nestorian controversy, and about Cyril of Alexandria's ambiguous terminology, it is difficult at times to grasp Miegge's meaning. Here especially his translator has failed him badly. No sectarian interest can be laid at Dr. Smith's door in this respect; Saint Leo the Great and Professor Giovanni Miegge alike fall under the same condemnation from the translator's errant pen. For example, in speaking of the *communicatio idiomatum,* the English version inverts the sense of Miegge's quotation from Pope Saint Leo the Great by turning a declarative sentence into an interrogative one: ". . . does it not belong to the same nature [the Italian, p. 68, reads: non é proprio—it does not] to pity a friend who has died and bring him to life again from the sepulchre where he has been for three days; or else to be hung upon the cross and change day to night and make all the elements tremble; to be pierced by nails and open the doors of paradise to the faith of the thief?" (p. 64).

The author finds in Ephesus the victory of a monophysite tendency, due to Cyril of Alexandria, but he has only praise for the precise formula of Pope Leo the Great, whose famous *Tome,* accepted at Chalcedon, fixed the meaning of *theotokos* with no trace of confusion of the two natures in Christ. "The pope sets forth, with arguments that are simple and concrete, the real humanity and real divinity of Christ" (p. 63). In spite of its correct theological sense, Miegge claims that in popular understanding *theotokos* all too soon acquired an importance in itself and for itself. Before the Church offered effective resistance, a rising tide of popular veneration incited by the high-sounding title, Mother of God, had transferred to Mary the attributes of the Mediterranean mother-goddesses (cf. p. 75). This is also the argument of chapter four, "Queen of Heaven."

ASSUMPTION

Chapter five is "The Assumption." There are three added pages about the definition, which were not in the original Italian edition. As one would expect, Miegge's idea of tradition is limited to historical tradition—a chain of written or oral evidence. The living

magisterium of the Church is not recognized by him. He admits a certain antiquity to popular belief in the Assumption: "When, following the Council of Ephesus, people began to reflect upon the dignity of Mary, it appeared impossible to think that her body had remained subject to corruption" (p. 93). He overrates the role of the apocrypha in the authentic development of the doctrine of the Assumption. But apart from this and from a few stray shots at the Jesuits, to whom he attributes the composition of *Munificentissimus Deus* ("pietism of the Jesuits" p. 106), Miegge's main objection is that "the new dogma has as its sole foundation the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church" (p. 106). "The real foundation of the dogma, according to the Bull, is on the one hand the consensus of the Church of the present time, and, on the other, its theological 'suitability' " (p. 104). Cardinal Newman would surely be chagrined to see the Church described as invoking the "modernist" principle of dogmatic development for the Assumption (p. 105); and he might be even more surprised to find his own theory on the development of dogma identified with "the great discovery of modernism" for maintaining which "many eminent Catholics in the first years of our century had to experience the rigours of excommunication" (p. 20).

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The author introduces the reader to the topic of the Immaculate Conception (chapter six) by describing the influence of the chivalric ideal of womanhood on the idealization of Mary from the eleventh century onwards. But then he traces this admiration of Mary back even beyond Saint Ambrose to the Eve-Mary comparison in Justin and Irenaeus. Since the Eve-Mary parallel is admittedly so ancient, one wonders why Miegge scolds Roschini so sharply ("presumptuous travesty of the thought of Paul") for accommodating *I. Cor.* 15: 21-22 in a Vatican radio-address on the Assumption: "Since by a man and a woman (Adam and Eve) came death, so by a man and a woman (Christ and Mary) came life, the resurrection of the dead" (p. 105).

Origen and Saint John Chrysostom are quoted to show that Mary's humanity was not free from such human failings as vanity, indiscreetness, etc. Yet these statements are so far from being representative of the true belief of the early Church that Newman could write of John Chrysostom's harsh accusation of vainglory

on Mary's part at Cana: "his whole passage is as much at variance with what we hold, as it is solitary and singular in the writings of antiquity."[8]

Professor Miegge sees the apocrypha as looming large in the development of the dogma: ". . . among the principal sources of the idealization of Mary and of her immaculate conception . . ." (p. 121). He laments the Immaculate Conception as "the negation at a decisive point of the doctrine of the universality of sin" (p. 123). Obviously, he would not agree that this singular privilege, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, is a reminder of the universal law rather than its threatened cancellation or its denial.

In the main, the survey of the scholastic discussion about the Immaculate Conception, and the gradual solution of the difficulties involved, is interestingly done. The author has a good grasp of his historical materials, even though his personal asides are less happy. It is a strained interpretation to say of *potuit, decuit, fecit,* "Thus dogmas are built up in Catholicism. Thus, by the admission of the Catholic mariologists, the entire mariology is constructed" (p. 125). For originally even that overworked formula read: *Potuit plane, si ergo voluit, fecit.*

The theologian studies a truth about our Lady not primarily in the light of logic, or as a syllogistic deduction from one or another primary revealed truth. The "suitability" comes not as the end-product of a process of study and thought, but because God has chosen it so. As Alex. Jones suggested in the case of the perpetual virginity, the argument of "doctrinal fitness" is not a substitute for facts or a subterfuge for their lack.[9] But granted the facts, one may certainly seek to show the fitness of the facts. And frequently the theologian so proceeds. He starts from known facts —either recorded in Scripture or otherwise transmitted (apostolic traditions)—facts interpreted and guaranteed by the infallible teaching authority of the living Church. There is a living magisterium, protected by the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit; this teaching authority is competent to say what God has revealed about the Virgin Mary. The Church does not read into the Scripture what is not already there; it discovers in the deposit of the faith

[8] J. H. Newman, *The New Eve* with introduction by P. Radcliffe (Oxford: Newman Bookshop, 1952), p. 57.

[9] Alex. Jones, *art. cit.*

confided to its care the treasures of truth that were always there, like a hidden spring that has been flowing beneath the surface all along. In the last analysis it is the Church as the custodian of revelation that Miegge rejects, for the Immaculate Conception, as for the Assumption and the perpetual virginity.

MEDIATION OF MARY

In his chapter "The Compassionate Mother" (chapter seven "La madre misericordiosa") the author is less concerned with the spiritual motherhood of Mary than with the notion of Mary as mediatrix of all graces. He finds this idea developed to absurdity in Saint Alphonsus Liguori's *The Glories of Mary*—"devoid of the most elementary critical sense" (p. 146). A communion of saints in which the blessed in heaven can intercede for those on earth is not admitted by Miegge (p. 136). He quotes the primitive new Eve comparison of Irenaeus. It is true that this parallel must be interpreted in the light of its own time, not with a twentieth-century outlook, but Miegge is himself going beyond the evidence in writing: "Her participation in the great event is occasional and passive. It is entirely concluded in the fact that she 'carried' Christ. . . . His [Irenaeus'] famous parallel creates the impression of an ingenious literary construction more than a considered and intentional theological doctrine" (p. 135).

Catholic writers, as Charles Moeller, have pointed out the difficulty caused in Protestants by the very words, mediatrix and coredemptrix.[10] Some Protestant writers see in Catholic Marian doctrine traces of monophysitism—a diminishing of the full humanity of Christ to the extent that Mary becomes a necessary mediatrix to the mediator Christ, necessary in order to re-introduce the human element into the the scheme of the redemption. The uniqueness of Christ's all-perfect and all-sufficient mediation must always be protected. Sound Mariology is impossible without sound Christology.

The chapter on "the compassionate mother" contains many quotations from Saint Bernard. A distinction is made between the "elementary ideas about the necessary mediatrix of the Mediator" (p. 140) displayed by the saint in the "devout paradoxes" addressed

[10] Charles Moeller, "The Virgin Mary in Contemporary Thought," in *Lumen Vitae,* VIII (1953, No. 2), 184-212, especially p. 202.

to his monks—"spiritual Marian milk," and "the hard food of the Christ-centred mysticism, of which his eighty-six sermons on the Song of Songs offer an incomparable text" (p. 140). Feudal society is said to have fatally changed the very concept of mediation. "God is the supreme majesty to whom none may come except through the hierarchy" (p. 141). I hope no reviewer accuses Miegge of snide remarks about the Catholic hierarchy; he is innocent, for his Italian text reads, "se non per via gerarchica"—"except in a hierarchical order" (p. 159), and Miegge is not speaking of the clergy.

A chapter entitled "The Co-redemptress" (chapter eight) continues the theme of the mediation. The problem is correctly stated: "Is the Holy Virgin only the collaborator of Christ in the distribution of graces that He acquired by Himself with His sacrifice on Calvary, or can we believe that Mary has collaborated with Him in some way in the acquiring, or more precisely in the language of the school, in 'meriting' these graces?" (pp. 156-57). The divergence of views even among Catholic theologians about the nature and extent of Mary's co-redemptive activity is known to Professor Miegge, but some of Roschini's statements are carelessly translated, e.g., "Mary had real maternal claims in regard to the Victim, claims of infinite worth" (p. 160), whereas the Italian reads, "Mary had real maternal claims in regard to the Victim of infinite worth"—"Nei riguardi della Vittima d'infinito valore, la B. Vergine aveva reali diritti materni" (p. 183). It is in the chapter on the co-redemptress that Miegge treats Mary as symbol of the Church, a theme he concedes "is very ancient and receives considerable favour to-day even among Protestants." He qualifies this, however, "on the Protestant side, we are in the realm of allegory rich in spiritual meaning; on the Catholic side, of sacramental realism" (pp. 176-77).

A concluding chapter discusses "Mary in Dogma and Devotion." Speaking of manifestations of Marian piety, the author finds a difficulty in the rosary that would strike even the humblest Catholic as ludicrous. For after granting that "It is sufficiently clear that a pious soul that recites the Rosary knows how to turn in the 'Our Father' to the Heavenly Father and in the 'Hail Mary' to the most human Queen of Heaven," he continues, ". . . it is not easy to imagine that sort of psychological oscillations between *latria* and *dulia* corresponding to the various moments of the prayer" (p.

180). A catalogue of various devotions to Mary is listed, and it is said that "If the sacred Mass . . . with its Christocentric orientation remains officially the centre of Catholic worship, the heart of the people is rather with the Virgin Mary than with the tremendous and abstract mysteries of the altar" (p. 182).

The truth is that a deepening appreciation of the Mass, the sacraments, and many other aspects of Catholic doctrinal and devotional life has gone hand-in-hand with the increase of interest in Mary the handmaid of the Lord. Yet there are excesses in popular piety, as well as shallow sermons and writings, that deface the true picture of Mary. The Church is most anxious for accuracy in both extra-liturgical and liturgical prayer. For example, in recent years the Church has said a strong "no" many times to false and dangerous reports of Marian apparitions. Cardinal Ottaviani of the Holy Office warned Catholics in February, 1951, not to hanker after the wonderful in the sphere of religion, not to think that running to sites of alleged visions can take the place of the sacraments and instruction in the faith, because true religion rests on the public revelation confided by Christ to his Church.[11]

When Professor Giovanni Miegge's book first appeared in Italy in 1950 it received a careful summary-report in *Marianum*.[12] The reviewer concluded with an expression of sympathy for the sincere effort Miegge had made to stake out a common meeting-ground between Christians about our Lady. Father Buffon expressed the hope that Miegge might find in the many Marian messages of Pope Pius XII convincing evidence of the eminently Christo-centric character of Marian cult. In a Waldensian periodical Professor Miegge expressed his appreciation of the fair notice he had received in *Marianum,* and acknowledged that "I do not doubt at all the subjective intention of the pope; that which seems to me difficult is to conciliate objectively Catholic Marian devotion with a truly Christo-centric faith. . . . I am grateful to the reviewer for his irenic spirit . . ."[13]

[11] Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano,* Feb. 14, 1951; English translation: "The Need for Prudence," in *AER,* CXXIV, 5 (May 1951), 321-26.

[12] Vincenzo M. Buffon, O.S.M., "Il problema mariano nel cattolicesimo nella storia e nel presente. Sintesi di un libro di G. Miegge sulla Madonna," in *Marianum,* XII (Oct. 1950), 313-31.

[13] From *Protestantesimo,* January-March, 1951, p. 45, as quoted in *Marianum,* XIV (April, 1952), 287.

A closing note in Miegge's book is the fear that "Mariology will pursue its triumphant development" to the point of replacing Christ in reality if not in theory (pp. 181, 191). Perhaps Professor Miegge may yet discover the truth of Pope Pius XII's statement: *"Never fear to exalt her too much. . . . devotion to the Virgin at least when correctly grasped, far from taking anything away from the glory of God, leads us rather directly back to that Author of all good who has willed her to be so great and so pure."*[14]

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[14] *Dans l'encyclique*, address of July 17, 1954; cf. *A.A.S.* XLVI (1954), 491-94; English translation in *The Pope Speaks* I (third quarter, 1954), 269-72.

CENSORSHIP AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION

One of the more disturbing aspects of Catholic life in the United States at the present time is a widespread though not by any means universal misunderstanding, on the part of Catholics, on the matter of the Church's power of jurisdiction. On one particular subject, that of the right to censor books and other publications, this weakness has manifested itself with special clarity over the course of the last few years. Several times during the past decade Catholic authors have published statements opposed to or at least incompatible with the standard and traditional power of the Church to forbid the reading of books and articles which the ecclesiastical authorities have judged harmful to the faithful. And in no instance was there any noticeable general reaction to teachings which were objectively opposed to basic Catholic teachings on this subject.

A very recent misstatement by a Catholic with reference to ecclesiastical censorship has attained a position of national prominence as a result of its inclusion in an editorial in *Harper's* October issue. This editorial, signed by Mr. John Fischer, and entitled "The Harm Good People Do," bitterly attacked the work of the Bishops' Committee for the National Organization for Decent Literature. In the course of this editorial, Mr. Fischer strongly recommended four "principles" on the subject of censorship. These "principles" were attributed to a Catholic writer. They clearly expressed Mr. Fischer's own attitude on the subject of censorship.

In the *Harper's* editorial, the first of these "principles" was thus presented: "Each minority group has the right to censor for its own members, if it so chooses, the contents of the various media of communication, and to protect them, by means of its own choosing, from materials considered harmful according to its standards." Mr. Fischer added that the Catholic writer responsible for the formation of this first "principle" had "also pointed out that in the United States 'all religious groups . . . are minority groups.' "[1]

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, CCXIII, 1277 (Oct. 1956), 17.

Now the teaching set forth in this "principle" so dear to the editor of *Harper's* is just the sort of thing we might expect to find on the editorial page of some secular magazine or newspaper. At first glance it appears to be, if not particularly profound, at least innocuous and acceptable. It is, incidentally, just the type of doctrine which, if presented by a Catholic author, is given an enthusiastic reception in non-Catholic intellectual circles.

Yet, on closer examination, this "principle" turns out to be quite definitely inaccurate and misleading. It speaks of "the right to censor." Properly speaking, censoring means the forbidding or prohibition of the publication, the distribution, the sale, and the reading of printed matter. It also includes the action of forbidding the staging or watching of plays, and the sending or receiving of material over the radio and television. It should be quite obvious that not every "minority group" possesses the right to exercise censorship, even over those who belong to the group.

Some social units definitely possess such a right. Thus, within the family group, the father has the right and the duty to supervise the reading available to his children. He has not only the competence but the obligation to forbid his children to read material which, in his judgment, would be morally harmful to them. Furthermore the state or the civil society has the right and the duty, to mention only one obvious example, to restrain publishers and merchants from placing before the young and impressionable obscene pictures and writings. Finally the true Church of Jesus Christ, endowed as it is by God Himself with the true power of jurisdiction, has also the right and the duty to forbid the publication, the distribution, and the reading of material which the authoritative leaders of the Church consider detrimental to the spiritual welfare of Our Lord's disciples.

It is quite certain that a minority group does not possess the right to censor published material merely by reason of the fact that it is a minority group. Neither, for that matter, does such a right belong to a majority group as such. The "principle" quoted and praised in the *Harper's* editorial spoke of "the right to censor." Hence it is not concerned with censorship like that imposed by the Communist Party in the lands subject to its tyranny, or like the violent prohibition of Catholic books in sixteenth-century England. The people who imposed or who still impose this type

of censorship have no objective right to do so. The censorship they bring about is inherently unjust, something done by mere violence.

On the other hand, the right to censor is justly exercised only when the prohibition directed against the publication or the reading of the book is a morally good act. Censorship in itself involves some effective action towards prohibiting the publication or the reading of some printed material. The state acts effectively in this direction when, for example, it steps in and confiscates the offending publication and invokes appropriate sanctions against the people responsible for producing and distributing it. The state has the right to act in this way when the material to which it objects is seriously and manifestly harmful to the temporal well being of its people. The Church acts effectively in the direction of censoring material for its own subjects when it morally obligates those subjects not to produce or not to read the matter which the competent ecclesiastical authority recognizes as really and gravely detrimental to the spiritual well being of Our Lord's flock. But groups, either minority or majority, possess no such competence from the very fact that they are groups.

Certainly no religious unit or group outside of the Catholic Church, the true and only kingdom of God on earth in the dispensation of the New Testament, has any native right whatsoever effectively to prohibit the publication, the dissemination, or the reading of any printed matter or the production or reception of any other medium of communication for its members or for anyone else. Any one of these non-Catholic religious groups would be acting immorally were it to presume to employ physical force, as the state can do legitimately, in prohibiting the production or the reading of any book. None of them possess the authority, which the true Church has received from God Himself, effectively to impose moral obligations, to demand obedience which can be withheld only at the cost of sin or offense against God. Consequently it is definitely not true that all religious groups have the right to censor published or otherwise communicated material, even for their own members. The basic assertion of this first "principle" is quite erroneous.

Speaking of censorship in the proper sense, the right to censor is native to three and only three societies. Within the family unit, the father has the right to exercise this function for the protection of his children. The Church and the state, as perfect societies,

possessing the true power of jurisdiction, have likewise the right to censor.

In social units other than the family, the state, and the true Church, the power to command effectively comes only from the agreement of the individuals who compose an organization. Certainly in organized social units built up on this basis there is no reason whatsoever to suspect that every leader is given the right to censor published or otherwise communicated material for the benefit or the protection of the members of his group. And, in groups which are not organized, there is no power or right to censor in any way whatsoever.

And, if we wish to consider censorship in a broad and loose sense, as including requests to sellers of printed material not to carry some individual books or pamphlets, any individual may well be said to possess the right to make such requests, in cases where the material against which the protest is made is objectively objectionable. If a merchant makes his living from the profit he derives from sales made to the people of a certain neighborhood, it is to be presumed that a representation to him that some of the material he exposes for sale is offensive to a number of his customers would actually be a favor to him.

Of course no individual or group has the right to ask for the removal of any publications that are morally acceptable and truthful. Any individual or any group, however, has the right to exercise this form of "censorship" by asking a merchant not to carry printed matter which is calculated, for example, to have a harmful effect on the morals of children who would tend to frequent his place of business to obtain legitimate merchandise.

Thus, when we examine the matter, we find that the first "principle" utilized and lauded by the editor of *Harper's* is set in the form of a disturbingly vague generalization. If the term "censor" is taken in its proper sense, as indicating an effective prohibition of printed or otherwise communicated material, the "principle" is erroneous. If, on the other hand, the term is extended to include requests made to merchants not to handle some particular printed or published material, the "principle" is so imprecise as to be valueless.

The second "principle" adduced and praised in the *Harper's* editorial is set forth in the form of a universal negative statement.

As Mr. Fischer cites it, this "principle" tells us that " 'No minority group has the right to demand that government should impose a general censorship' on material 'judged to be harmful according to the special standards held within one group.' "[2]

Again, this "principle," at first sight, appears to be only a kind of platitude or harmless generalization. Actually, however, it hides some highly misleading connotations.

In point of fact any group has the right and even the obligation to demand that its government act to procure the end for which civil government was instituted by God Himself, and act to repress any efforts aimed directly at the ruin of the objective towards which civil government is directed. The civil society exists to procure and to aid the temporal well-being of its citizens. Some operations, for example, that of making obscene and lascivious material easily accessible to the youth of a country, are immediately and directly opposed to even the temporal well-being of that country's citizenry. Any individual or any group has the right to demand that the government repress such activity, even under circumstances in which the offending parties and their sympathizers would denounce such governmental activity as censorship of printed material.

Doctrinally speaking, the "special standards held" within the Catholic Church must be considered as the authoritative and authentic voice of the Church's *magisterium*. The pronouncements of this *magisterium* are objectively accurate. In our own day the most frequently employed vehicle of the Catholic *ecclesia docens* is the Holy Father's ordinary *magisterium*. And, according to Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Humani generis,* Our Lord's words: "He who hears you, hears me," are verified in and apply to the ordinary *magisterium* of the Roman Pontiff.[3]

Other "minority groups," even the religious bodies among them, have no such special standard. Hence it is quite misleading to lump together the "special standards" for doctrinal and moral decisions available in or employed by "minority groups" within which classification the Catholic Church itself is included. Such procedure is always objectively inaccurate. It is tragically misleading in the writing of a Catholic.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] The Latin text is in *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* CXXIII, 5 (Nov. 1950), 389. The scriptural reference is to *Luke* 10: 16.

The "principle" speaks of material "judged to be harmful" according to these special standards. In point of fact, no one has the right to demand that a government should take any action other than against material seen and recognized as harmful in the sense that it is destructive of the very end for which the state itself has been instituted. This means, obviously, not something harmful to the purpose of some theoretical state, but to the actually existing and concrete civil society in a particular area. What is true, and what has really been ordered by God Himself, cannot be repressed or attacked by the state except through immoral activity on the part of the state and of its leaders. No group, minority or majority, has any right whatsoever to demand or to recommend any such procedure.

On the other hand, material which is of itself manifestly calculated to influence children to ruin their lives by vicious habits is something which any government has the right and the duty to combat. Any individual and any group must be considered as privileged to urge the civil government to do its duty in this case, and to stand behind it and encourage it insofar as it carries out its obligations. Catholic citizens are in no wise barred from this privilege by reason of the fact that they see the harm inherent in smutty books and magazines, not merely in an examination of the natural law itself, but through the aid of their "special standard" of doctrinal and moral judgment, the voice of the Church's *magisterium.*

Mr. Fischer cites and approves a third "principle," to the effect that "Any minority group has the right to work toward the elevation of standards of public morality . . . through the use of methods of persuasion and pacific argument."[4] Despite the innocuous character of this "principle," it tends to mislead by virtue of its very generality. The editor of *Harper's* called attention to the fact, that in the intention of the original author of these "principles," all religious groups were included in the category of "minority groups." And, in point of objective fact, all religious groups are definitely not endowed with the same rights to work towards the elevation of the norms of public or of private morality.

The Catholic Church, as God's true *ecclesia* of the New Testament, has been commissioned and commanded by God Himself to work towards the raising of the standards of morality. God has

[4] *Harper's, loc. cit.*

entrusted to this society, within which His Divine Son lives and rules, the salvific and necessary task of preaching His public revealed message. He has likewise confided to this society the divinely instituted means for the acquisition and the increment of the life of supernatural grace. The standards of morality set forth within God's revealed message are the only valid and complete standards by which the activity of men can be judged with reference to ultimate value.

No other religious group has been so commissioned and empowered by God. And, whenever the activity of any of these groups is opposed to the work of God's true and supernatural kingdom on earth, that activity is definitely not ordered to the raising of standards of morality. The same is true of any non-religious group, whether minority or majority.

The fourth and last of the "principles" utilized in Mr. Fischer's editorial is by far the most interesting. As he quotes it: "No minority group has the right to impose its own religious or moral views on other groups, through the use of methods of force, coercion, or violence."[5]

This last of the four "principles" quoted and admired by Mr. Fischer turns out to have been somewhat ambiguous. It admits of one interpretation which is quite proper and acceptable. In the course of his attack on the NODL, however, the editor of *Harper's* shows that he has given it quite another meaning.

In its obvious and primary sense, this "principle" means that no group in the world has any right to try to force others into its own membership. It is a great wrong to try to force any individual to accept or to profess even the true faith of Jesus Christ. It is still worse to try to force anyone to accept or to profess some teaching opposed to divinely revealed truth. No one at all has a right to use force, coercion, or violence to compel another to accept any teaching.

It is unfortunate that the "principle" limits this to "minority groups." An attempt to impose any religious or moral views by coercion or violence is just as wrong for a majority group as it is for any organized or unorganized minority.

The abuse and misapplication of this "principle" in Mr. Fischer's editorial shows the need for precision in Catholic writings on this

[5] *Ibid.*

subject. The editor of *Harper's* tries to make it appear that the National Organization for Decent Literature has in some way tried to impose its own religious and moral views on other groups. He writes:

> Its campaign [that of the NODL] is not aimed at Catholics alone, and it is not attempting to *persuade* readers to follow its views. It is *compelling* readers, of all faiths, to bow to its dislikes, by denying them a free choice in what they buy.[6]

What Mr. Fischer is describing is the campaign of the National Organization for Decent Literature to dissuade owners of drug stores and newsstands from selling morally filthy pamphlets and magazines in their places of business. This organization, working under the direction of a committee of bishops appointed by the Catholic hierarchy of the United States, is realistic enough to be aware of the fact that places like drug stores and newsstands have a powerful and legitimate attraction for children, and to take cognizance of the fact that children are endangered by having easy access to immoral printed material. Consequently it gladly cooperates with men and women who work to protect their children from this danger.

The *Harper's* editorial displays some strange logic in accusing the NODL of "*compelling* readers, of all faiths, to bow to its dislikes, by denying them a free choice in what they buy." He clearly implies that people in search of reading material have no such free choice unless they are given the opportunity to purchase dirty comic books or magazines. People are supposed to be under compulsion where such material is not exposed for sale as the result of activity by the NODL. Mr. Fischer himself urges news dealers, booksellers, and other merchants (presumably owners of drug stores and soda fountains) to "refuse to sell any publication which —in their own untrammeled judgment—falls below their own standards as responsible business men."[7] If, as a result of this urging, some individual excluded from his place of business the very material against which the NODL objects, would his customers henceforth be under compulsion? Would they be compelled to bow to the dislikes of Mr. Fischer and of the merchant? If Mr. Fischer is at all consistent, he must imagine that people are denied a free choice as customers in any place that sells printed

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

matter unless every available item of published material is offered to them.

The logic or lack of it manifested in the *Harper's* editorial is interesting only in the measure that it shows the necessity for exact accuracy in Catholic writings which may be publicized by careless non-Catholic intellectuals. Much more important is its coupling of "the members of the National Organization for Decent Literature" with "any other self-appointed censors."[8]

Now the NODL acts under the direction of a Bishops' Committee, appointed each year by the Catholic hierarchy of the United States. If it operates in any given diocese, it acts at the behest of the Ordinary of that diocese. The Catholic bishop is definitely not a self-appointed censor. Through the successor of St. Peter, the diocesan bishop derives his authority from, and is responsible to, Our Lord Himself. God has commissioned him to direct and to teach Our Lord's flock within the confines of his diocese in such a way that, through his direction and instruction, the members of that flock may glorify God forever in the clarity of the Beatific Vision. Included in that commission is a genuine power of jurisdiction, a competence to issue orders which can be disobeyed by members of his flock only at the cost of offending God.

The bishop exercises his jurisdiction when, in line with the directives of the Holy See and of the universal Church, he commands his people to do something which he recognizes as requisite for the spiritual welfare of his local Church or forbids something which he sees to be destructive of or at least harmful to that welfare. Thus, he is only carrying out the commission he has received from God Himself if he decides to forbid his people to read certain books or magazines, and when he commands them to keep morally dirty printed matter away from their children.

If that printed matter is accessible to the children in some store which they would normally be expected to frequent, it is certainly more charitable and more pleasant to ask the storekeeper to cease selling it than it would be to keep the family away from the store altogether. In acting thus, in accordance with the directives of their hierarchy's committee, Catholic citizens show respect for the storekeeper by dealing with him as a legitimate businessman, rather than as one who is primarily a peddler of printed smut.

[8] *Ibid.*

But this is precisely the procedure to which Mr. Fischer objects. It is unfortunate that he was able to employ in his argument statements from a Catholic source which, in writing on the subject of censorship, did not take cognizance of the Church's power of jurisdiction. And it is doubly unfortunate that the Catholics who received and cited these "principles" so enthusiastically did not advert to this basic defect.

There have been occasions in recent years when, in well received writings by Catholics, this power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction on the part of a bishop was not merely disregarded, but flagrantly denied. One such example is to be found in Mr. James O'Neill's *Catholicism and American Freedom,* a book that enjoyed extraordinary popularity a few years ago. Mr. O'Neill wrote:

> Anyone who wishes to see a play, regardless of what the dramatic critics think of it in New York, or who wishes to read a book, regardless of the reviews it gets at the hands of the leading journals, is free to read the book and may see the play if he hurries before it goes off the boards. The play may disappear on account of having been condemned by a dozen private citizens (dramatic critics) expressing their private opinions. The person who reads or hears of the condemnation of a play, movie, or book by a Catholic priest, bishop, committee, or organization has precisely the same freedom. He may read the book, he may see the play or the movie, and neither bishop, priest, nor organization can *prevent* him from exercising his own judgment in this matter or can *punish* him for going against their advice, counsel, or direction.[9]

Catholicism and American Freedom made many good and shrewd observations, but its teaching quoted above was utterly confused and misleading. In this passage Mr. O'Neill certainly gives the impression that, in condemning a book, a bishop does no more than assert that the volume is unacceptable and urge his people not to read it. This is definitely implied when he puts the power of the bishop on the level of that possessed by the Catholic priest, or by a committee or organization of Catholics. And it is likewise implied in the parallel he draws between the action of a book reviewer and that of the bishop. He goes so far as to assert that the person who learns that a bishop has condemned a book (or a play or a motion picture) has exactly the same freedom that he would have had he

[9] O'Neill, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 116.

learned that one of these works had been adversely criticized in an important newspaper or magazine.

Mr. O'Neill should have known better. It is an integral part of canon law that "the right and the duty to prohibit books for a just cause belongs, not only to the supreme ecclesiastical authority for the universal Church, but also to particular councils and to local Ordinaries for their own subjects."[10] If a bishop condemns a book by forbidding it, his subjects are bound in conscience to obey him. They are definitely not morally free to read the book. The man who disobeys his bishop by reading a book which the bishop has prohibited thereby commits a sin.

Particularly unfortunate is the last sentence of the paragraph cited above. Mr. O'Neill, speaking of a man who has learned of the condemnation of a book or a play or a motion picture "by a Catholic priest, bishop, committee, or organization," says: "He may read the book, he may see the play or the movie, and neither bishop, priest, nor organization can *prevent* him from exercising his own judgment in this matter or can *punish* him for going against their advice, counsel, or direction."

Now the bishop differs from the priest and from the Catholic organization precisely insofar as he has the power, not only to warn against bad books, but to command his subjects not to read them. If a residential bishop or any other local Ordinary merely advises his subjects not to read some book or not to see some play, he has certainly not bound those subjects to obedience. But the point is that, by virtue of the responsibility and the authority committed to him, he need not necessarily limit himself to mere advice. He can issue an order. If he chooses to do so, then that command definitely obligates those who are subject to him.

He cannot physically prevent a member of his own flock from disobeying the command he has given, in this field or in any other. He can, however, prevent a man from being morally free to read the book or see the play he has forbidden. The bishop cannot punish a man for disregarding advice he has given him, but he definitely can punish one of his subjects who wilfully disobeys his commands. The Church's Code of Canon Law, in its fifth book, tells of the penalties which the competent authorities of the Catholic Church can inflict on those who have offended against its precepts.

[10] Canon 1395, § 1.

About ten years ago the magazine *Commonweal* carried an article entitled "The *Estrada* Incident." The article was written by a Mr. George P. Doherty, and it was concerned with the prohibition by Cardinal Copello, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, of a magazine named *Estrada* in March, 1946. In this article Mr. Doherty manifested a crass misunderstanding of the episcopal power of jurisdiction, particularly with regard to the prohibition of reading matter.

The author seemed to have been under the impression that the prohibition of a magazine would be legitimate only if some heresy were contained within it. He wrote that "If *Estrada* had published some heresy, Cardinal Copello should have taken the trouble to explain the heresy to the Catholics of Buenos Aires." And, he added, "If *Estrada* in fact contained no heresy, a much graver issue is raised. In that case Cardinal Copello was guilty of a grievous abuse of his authority as a bishop." Mr. Doherty concluded: "But when such an abuse does occur, Catholics not just of that diocese but throughout the world have a solemn duty to expose and resist it."[11]

In other words, according to an article printed in a journal generally accepted as a Catholic publication, when a bishop forbids some publication which contains no heretical teachings, he is abusing his position; and his subjects, together with all other Catholics, are in duty bound to resist him and his command. As Mr. Doherty saw it, a bishop's authority or power with regard to the prohibition of published material would be limited in fact to a mere competence to indicate a heresy contained in the offending publication. The authority of the bishop in this field would be neither more nor less than that of any person with theological knowledge.

The Church's law on this point is quite explicit. It takes cognizance of the fact that, in the case of the prohibition of books, there might sometimes be room for appeal from the ruling of a local Ordinary. It allows for the possibility of an appeal, not to the Catholics of the world, but precisely and solely to the Holy See. It insists at the same time that until such an appeal has been decided by the Holy See, the bishop's ruling remains in force.[12] The law of the Catholic Church certainly does not permit the subjects of any

[11] *Commonweal*, XLV, 3 (Nov. 1, 1946), 65.
[12] Cf. canon 1395, § 2.

bishop to resist the command of their Ordinary on their own account, or even on the recommendation of individuals like the author of the article in *Commonweal.*

The three statements by Catholics with reference to an ecclesiastical authority's right to censor or to forbid books are seriously inaccurate in themselves. They manifest, moreover, a thoroughly erroneous and misleading tendency. All of them represent the Catholic Church as having, for all practical purposes, exactly the same jurisdictional power in this field as that possessed by other religious groups and organizations.

The four "principles" set forth by a Catholic writer and adduced and recommended by the editor of *Harper's* speak of the competence of "minority groups." Mr. Fischer, the author of the editorial, was able to quote from the same Catholic source, the assertion that, in this country, all religious groups are minority groups. Such teaching by a Catholic is obviously calculated to give the impression that the Catholic Church, as a minority group, claims to possess and actually possesses the same powers in the field of censorship which belong to every other religious group, and, for that matter, to every minority group. And, what the writer quoted in the *Harper's* editorial has done in a rather subtle way, Mr. O'Neill and the writer in *Commonweal* have set forth much more bluntly.

Misleading and inaccurate teaching of this kind is particularly harmful today. One of the great dangers of our time is that of indifferentism, the error which describes eternal salvation as attainable in religious units outside of the Catholic Church. One of the most specious forms of indifferentism is that which depicts the Catholic Church as being, for all practical purposes at least, on the same level as other religious organizations in this world. And there is no more effective way of introducing this error than in the practical denial of the Catholic Church's God-given power of jurisdiction, a power which includes, among other things, the competence to forbid under penalty of sin against God Himself, the publication and the reading of objectionable books.

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Answers to Questions

A PROBLEM IN THE EUCHARISTIC FAST

Question: If a person who normally enjoys good health finds it necessary in the course of the night to take some medicine because of a transient illness, may he receive Holy Communion in the morning provided he can obtain the permission of a confessor in the meantime? In other words, may the requisite permission be given after the person has taken the medicine but before he receives Holy Communion?

Answer: The Apostolic Constitution *Christus Dominus,* which granted such generous concessions in the matter of the eucharistic fast, does indeed seem to imply that the permission of the confessor is necessary for *the taking of medicine before Holy Communion.* But when we analyze the case it becomes very evident that what the confessor actually permits is *the reception of Holy Communion after the taking of medicine.* For, surely, there is no Church law that forbids the taking of medicine by a sick person; but there is a law forbidding (apart from a dispensation or other form of exemption) the reception of Holy Communion after the breaking of one's fast. Hence, if a person who plans to receive Holy Communion in the morning finds it necessary to take medicine after midnight, let him seek the advice of a confessor in the morning, and if this latter believes that there was sufficient reason for the individual to take medicine, he need not hesitate to inform the petitioner that he may approach the holy table.

THE ORGANIST AT CHORAL CHANTING OF THE OFFICE

Question: When priests or religious bound to the recitation of the Divine Office are chanting the canonical Hours in choir, one of their number may be assigned to play the organ in accompaniment. Does he satisfy his obligation of reciting the Office if he

merely plays the organ without singing or enunciating any of the verses?

Answer: Ballerini-Palmieri expressed the opinion that the organist "merely hears the entire Office; but since one who plays the organ becomes a part of the choir and is associated with it, he is considered as reciting the Office with those who chant it" (*Opus theologicum morale* [Pistoia, 1893], IV, 254). But this view is certainly regarded as too lenient by more modern theologians. Thus, Noldin-Schmitt-Heinzel state without any qualification: "One who plays the organ while the divine Office is being chanted in choir does not satisfy his obligation unless he recites or sings at least the verse of one part" (*Summa theologiae moralis* [Innsbruck, 1954], II, n. 765). Fanfani upholds the same doctrine, though he grants that the organist will satisfy his obligation if he omits only one or the other psalm, because in this case the choir will supply (*Manuale theologiae moralis* [Rome, 1950], III, n. 314). Prümmer states as the common opinion that the organist does not satisfy his obligation unless he pronounces the alternate verses with one part of the choir and responds with the choir to those parts that are said by one (*Manuale theologiae moralis* [Friburg, 1953], II, n. 374). In view of these statements it is difficult to see how anyone can safely hold that the organist fulfils his obligation merely by playing the organ without any vocal participation in the chanting of the Office. At most, one could say with Vermeersch that this opinion can be followed only if custom interprets the matter in this way (*Theologia moralis* [Bruges, 1927], III, n. 48).

TRAFFICKING IN MASS STIPENDS

Question: What is meant by *negotiatio et mercatura*, the very appearance of which is to be excluded from transactions in Mass stipends, according to Canon 827?

Answer: The best expression to cover both of these terms, as far as I can judge, is *commercialism*. Jone translates these words as *trading* and *barter* (*Moral Theology*, n. 539). What is meant is that in transmitting stipends from the donor to the priest who

celebrates the Mass no third party shall profit by the transaction merely by acting as "middle man." The purpose of this prohibition is very evident. The Mass is so sacred a rite that even the appearance of making it the object of trade, as one might do with food or clothing, is shocking and irreverent. Hence, the Church has always legislated stringently against any procedures that would involve commercialism in the transfer of Mass stipends. The most explicit and detailed pronouncement on this matter is the Decree *Ut debita*, issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Council, on May 11, 1904 (*Fontes juris canonici*, n. 4317). Abbo-Hannan assure us that this legislative act still remains in force, apart from its penal sanctions which have been mitigated by the Code (*The Sacred Canons*, I, 827). The portion pertinent to our question is found in the eighth paragraph, which makes this ruling:

> It is absolutely forbidden to everyone to hand over Mass obligations and stipends received from Holy places or from the faithful to book dealers and merchants, to those in charge of periodicals and newspapers, even though these are religious men, to dealers in sacred vessels and vestments, and generally to any persons, even ecclesiastics, who request these Masses, not simply for the purpose of celebrating them, either by themselves or by priests subject to them, but for any other purpose, however excellent. For it is evident that this cannot be done except by performing some kind of trading with the Mass stipends, or by diminishing the alms, both of which procedures the Sacred Congregation has decided must be avoided. Hence, in future, anyone who will presume to violate this law, either by knowingly handing over Masses in the manner described or by accepting them, in addition to the grave sin which he will commit will incur the penalties stated below.

Although, as was stated above, the penalties laid down by this decree no longer hold, the prohibition to trade with Mass stipends still binds *sub gravi*. It is to be noted that both those who give and those who receive the stipends under the conditions described are guilty of mortal sin. By virtue of this stern prohibition, therefore, a priest who would consign a number of stipends to some individual with the stipulation that in return he will receive, not only the assurance that the Masses will be celebrated, but also some definite remuneration, such as books, a watch, a trip, the use of a car, a chalice, etc., would be guilty of a serious violation of Church law. In addition, he would frequently fail against the

divine law by incurring the danger of causing scandal and of fostering an irreverent attitude toward the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. When a transaction of this kind takes place on a large scale, so that priests who directly receive the stipends must transfer them to others, the stipend given to the celebrant will necessarily be less than the original stipend—otherwise it would be impossible to remunerate the one who collected the stipends. Now, it is true, a reduction of the stipend in transmission is sometimes justified—for example, if an indult to this effect has been granted or if the recipient spontaneously agrees to this process. But even in such an event the law forbidding commercialism or even its appearance still binds. Hence, even when the reduction of the stipend is permitted, the avoidance of even the appearance of commercialism is strictly obligatory. Priests must ever bear in mind that the Church has always been uncompromising in condemning any procedures that would drag down the eucharistic sacrifice to the category of a commodity that can be bought and sold and bartered.

FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R.

COMMUNITY OBLIGATIONS TO AN EX-RELIGIOUS

Question: What financial obligations does a community have towards a member who obtains an indult of secularization?

Answer: A religious who accepts an indult of secularization effectively cuts himself off from the religious institute to which he formerly belonged. Canon 643, § 1, states that such a one cannot seek remuneration for services rendered while a member of the institute. Since this point may not be so clear in the eyes of civil law, superiors may prudently require candidates entering the institute to sign some form of an agreement which will be recognized by civil law whereby they yield any claims to remunerations for services rendered while in the institute. An agreement of the kind may forestall legal difficulties at some later date. Although Canon Law thus precludes any claim in justice against the community for services rendered, it does not release the institute from equitable and charitable responsibility. It is quite explicit regarding a female religious who leaves the institute although no

specific law covers the case of a male religious who goes back to the world. If the female religious has been received into the religious institute without a dowry, or with a dowry that is not sufficient for her to face the world, the community must come to her financial aid to enable her to maintain a dignified position in society while adjusting herself to her new circumstances (Canon 643, § 2). The responsibility on the part of the community, however, is only a temporary one since the community cannot be considered to assume permanent liability for all who depart from it. Possibly the reason for the law's specific mention of the female religious is the fact that the legislator saw greater difficulties facing a woman going back to the world with inadequate funds than he did in the case of a man. It would seem, therefore, that arguments based on equity and charity could also be marshalled in favor of specific cases of male religious who withdraw from religious life. Lest the question of equitable discharge of obligations be left in the nebulous realms of theory, it may be useful to state the manner in which some institutes translate their responsibilities towards needy sisters who leave the institute. The person is equipped with a dignified minimum of clothes for the world, transportation expenses to her home, a sum of one hundred dollars for the first month away from the institute, and a similar sum at the beginning of the next two months. Accordingly the solicitude of the community is extended over a period of three months during which time the person should be able to adjust herself to her new circumstances of life. Where possible the community should even assist the individual in obtaining suitable employment. Provisions of the kind certainly seem charitable and equitable and should greatly help charitable relationships between the individual and the institute. Particular cases may dictate some variations in these provisions but in the event of disagreement between the interested parties, Canon 643 authorizes the local Ordinary to determine a solution.

CONFINEMENT OF A RELIGIOUS IN A SECULAR INSTITUTION

Question: May a superior commit a mentally sick religious to a secular institution?

Answer: In itself there is no intrinsic wrong in committing a religious to a secular institution for mental care although each case must be examined in all its circumstances. The superiors and religious institute should not be prone to acquit themselves of financial care and worry through such a procedure. Rather the individual should be regarded as any other sick member of the community for whom proper care is provided. Only when it is judged that such care cannot be had elsewhere, or if it is to be had, the cost will be prohibitive, does it seem proper to commit the sick religious to a secular institute. Moreover, it is frequently the case that secular institutions are better equipped to provide for mental patients so this, too, will be a point for superiors to take into consideration. On the other hand, the superiors will have the obligation to learn something about the institution, its moral practices, and its provisions for spiritual care of the inmates so that the religious will suffer no harm through the confinement.

Canon 606, § 2, various responses from the Holy See, and widespread practice indicate the need for an indult in cases where the confinement is to exceed a period of six months. The indult required is one of exclaustration for the religious to live outside of the religious house. Many advantages may be urged in favor of the interpretation requiring an indult in such cases. It gives an opportunity for the Holy See and the local ordinary to establish whatever provisions are deemed necessary for each case. In fact, the same requirement is urged when confinement is required in a Catholic institution if the period of absence is foreseen to exceed six months and the institution is not operated by members of the same religious community. It may be noted, however, that a growing tendency exists among canonists to regard a necessary confinement in a hospital or mental institution as an instance where an indult is not necessary. This view may enjoy some merit in cases that demand care in a Catholic institution where it may be expected that consideration and regard will be had for the status of the patient. When the patient is to be confined in a secular institution, the view may be questioned because ecclesiastical authorities will very likely receive no information on the case and will be thwarted in their desires to establish salutary provisions for the patient and for the prevention of wonderment among lay people.

ROMAEUS W. O'BRIEN, O.CARM.

Analecta

Leaders of the liturgical apostolate from many nations heard the Holy Father enthusiastically encourage them in their great work. The Pope's address of September 24, to the 1,300 delegates to the International Congress on Pastoral Liturgy which had been meeting for four days previously in Assisi, was but another evidence of his deep personal interest in the revitalization of Catholic worship.

Praising his listeners the Pope said: "It seems to Us that the present day attitude of liturgical circles towards the past is quite balanced." He referred to a discernment of the immutable elements from the transitory changeable elements as the basis of such a balanced point of view.

The Pope was also anxious to welcome the laity to an ever more active participation in the worship of the Church. Far from being the cause of suspicion and rivalry between the hierarchy and the faithful, he feels that this interest scores the marvelous unity of the Mystical Body. "The contribution which is brought to the liturgy by the hierarchy and by the faithful is not reckoned as two separate quantities, but the joint work of members of the same organism, which acts as a single living entity."

His Holiness also discussed with his usual precision certain problems that he felt needed additional clarification. Repeating his teaching of the *Mediator Dei,* the Pope stated that only the celebrating priest offers the Sacrifice of the Mass. But once the consecration is over, "the offering of the victim placed on the altar can be made and is made by the priest celebrant, by the Church, by other priests, and by each of the faithful." In commenting on the growing custom of the priest celebrating Mass facing the people the Holy Father brought up the matter of the tabernacle as a possible obstruction to the view of the faithful. Earlier in his discussion the Pope made it clear that the altar was more important than the tabernacle, but also that "it was one and the same Lord who is immolated on the altar and honored in the tabernacle." Here he insisted that the tabernacle and altar should not be separated because they "by their origin and nature" should remain

united. He left for specialists, however, the problem of how to place the tabernacle so as not to impede the view of the faithful when Mass is celebrated in this manner.

On October 8, the Holy Father addressed by radio the vast assembly which had gathered in St. Peter's for the beatification of Innocent XI, supreme Pontiff from 1676-1689, who, the Pope declared, points the paths of security, peace, and spiritual renewal to the present age. For our age, like that of Blessed Innocent, the Pope said, "is marked by an urgent need for a spiritual rebirth, by the gravity and vital nature of its disputes, and by dangers which threaten all."

The Pope's address reviewed the life of the new *Beatus*—Innocent's vigorous completion of the internal reform of the Church begun at the Council of Trent, his defense of the rights of the Church especially against Louis XIV of France, his magnificent leadership of Christian Europe against the threat of the Turks and the victory of Christian armies before the gates of Vienna, his inspiration of a spiritual renaissance—he, too, advocated daily reception of the Blessed Eucharist—in opposition to the blight of Jansenism. In this vital matter of spiritual renewal Innocent XI can speak to us also, the Pope said. And Innocent points to the foundation of spiritual regeneration, loyal obedience to the Holy Father. Fundamental to a spiritual awakening is Christians' "uniting, with common action, around him whom God has placed on earth as the universal pastor of souls, in allowing themselves to be guided by him, and in collaborating faithfully with him." His Holiness concluded his address by a close comparison of Blessed Innocent with St. Pius X, another Pope who initiated a great spiritual renaissance.

Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the sacred college of cardinals, officiated at the morning beatification ceremonies. Pius XII motored in the evening from Castel Gondolfo to Rome to venerate the relics of Blessed Innocent.

In recent weeks His Holiness has made two significant statements respecting the economic order. In the first, on September 25, a letter to Cardinal Siri of Genoa, on the occasion of the 29th Italian National Social week, the Pontiff pointed both to the Church's defense of private property as well as to her insistence on the social function of property. In the other, an address to the

Catholic Congress of Associations of Small Businesses, delivered on October 9, the Pope expressed the great benefits to be derived by a greater share of ownership and control of businesses by the employees themselves.

In the letter to Cardinal Siri, the Pope argued strongly against the divorce of morality from economics expressed in the concept that the maximum profit to the owners is the basic principle of ownership. "This is in clear contrast with the dignity of the person, because such a concept implies the negation of spiritual values and proposes the inhuman exploitation of work and the enslavement of man to the machine." He reminded the National Social Week of the state's function to secure the common good by recalling "individuals to their social duties and to discipline—always within the limits of what is just and honest."

Addressing the Congress of Small Businesses in Rome, His Holiness developed the notion of how beneficial greater ownership and control of business by the employees can be. Ownership and responsibility, the Pope said, provide both a powerful stimulus for the common good and a deeper sense of self-respect for the workers involved. Just as owners are concerned that the goods of their labor bear fruit, so are the workers themselves. "Do not they also have the right to a stable position in society, to possess the goods necessary for themselves and their families, to make them productive by their own initiative and draw legitimate profit from them?" In this moving appeal for greater collaboration between business and the workers the Pope stressed "the profound value of the worker" and begged all to accept the Christian ideal in economic life.

To those who know the varied audiences to whom the Holy Father addresses himself it was no surprise that the Pontiff spoke to the Seventh International Congress of Astronautics on September 21. Blessing man's efforts to conquer the universe peacefully, the Pope reminded his 700 listeners that man's self-knowledge and his knowledge of divine things must keep apace with his tremendously expanding knowledge of the world, so that man can have a more precise idea of his position in the world.

The Holy Father suggested the establishment of centers to bring pastoral methods up to date and to keep priests informed of new techniques in the apostolate. In his address on September 15 to

the Sixth Italian Study Week on Revision of Pastoral Practice the Pope said: "A center for proposing directives in pastoral work . . . is legitimate and in many cases necessary. The 'priest with the care of souls' can and must know what modern science, art, and technique affirm wherever they touch on the end of man in his moral and religious life . . ."

The main body of the Pope's address concerned the philosophy of Christian preaching in keeping with the theme of the Congress: "The Word of God in the Christian Community." Christ's method of preaching—his ability to prompt a receptive disposition in his audience, as well as faith, trust, love, dedication, and imitation was first considered. Then the Pontiff considered the Church's teaching which like Christ's is marvelously well adapted to its audience. He reminded his hearers of the papal directives in every area of modern life, from education to nuclear warfare. In this address he repeated his teaching of *Humani Generis* concerning the position of theologians; they exercise their office only by delegation of the Church and hence remain subject to the authority and vigilance of the magisterium.

Although not all are equipped to engage in the apostolate of the laity, all can "burn with apostolic spirit" by exercising the apostolate of prayer. Such was the main point of the Holy Father's words to the International Congress of The Apostleship of Prayer in its meeting on September 29. The Pope expressed the "strong wish" that all join in this noble apostolate by the daily offering of one's works to God, by union with the Sacrifice of the Mass, and by actual assistance at daily Mass if possible.

Our Holy Father took the opportunity of audience granted to sixty-four Irish policemen on September 15 to express his concern over the spiritual welfare of Irish emigrants as well as his admiration for the Irish "high and holy mission" of spreading the faith throughout the world. Since the policemen were members of the Total Abstinence Union of the Sacred Heart, His Holiness mentioned the great harm being done by alcoholism today and the great good such organizations as theirs can do.

Mention must here be made of a recent book published by the Sacred Congregation for Religious which is now available in this country, a work which will certainly be the inspiration for much study and writings in the future. The title of the book is *Constitutio Apostolica "Sedes Sapientiae" eique adnexa "Statuta Generalia"*

de religiosa, clericali, apostolica institutione in statibus adquirendae perfectionis clericis impertienda. The books opens wth the Apostolic Constitution *"Sedes Sapientiae"* of the present Holy Father (*Acta,* XLVIII [1956], 354-65) in which are given general principles for the formation and direction of those called to the state of religious perfection. The Holy Father discusses the vocations to religious life and to the priesthood in religious life. Both vocations require special qualifications in the candidate, qualifications distinct from those required in the candidate to the secular priesthood. Candidates to the religious priesthood have need for special training and guidance for their proper formation as novices, as religious, and apostles in the care of souls. The Holy Father points to the absolute need for competent personnel in religious seminaries and in order to facilitate the proper formation of candidates in such places, he authorized the Sacred Congregation of Religious to draw up a body of statutes to be enforced in seminaries for religious so that the clerical formation imparted there will measure up to the requirements of the clerical religious vocation.

Immediately after the Constitution of the Holy Father, there is a decree dated July 7, 1956, from His Eminence Cardinal Valeri, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, in which he makes the body of general statutes which follows obligatory for seminaries of religious. This decree of Cardinal Valeri states that the statutes are effective as of Aug. 31, 1956. The statutes cover approximately seventy pages: they are divided into eleven Articles and fifty-three Titles.

The *Statuta Generalia* of the Sacred Congregation fill a great need in the law for religious. Hitherto no extensive law has existed in the Code regarding the formation of clerics in religious institutes. In this book one now finds a detailed system of regulations for religious governing their minor seminaries, their major seminaries, and the post-ordination period of apostolic formation. No longer must one constantly turn to the law for secular seminaries and seek applications to those for religious. In the *Statuta* one has a detailed and readily applicable system for all phases in the training of a religious priest.

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Book Reviews

A JOHN LA FARGE READER. Edited by Thurston N. Davis, S.J., and Joseph Small, S.J. New York: America Press, 1956. Pp. xiv + 272. $3.50.

Those readers who have had the pleasure of reading Father La Farge's autobiography might possibly concede that "the manner is ordinary" even if the man, indeed, is not; but it is more probable that one would say, with all reverence to his Spiritual Father, to whom we are indebted for the phrase, that everything about this son of Ignatius is quite extraordinary.

Father La Farge, since the turn of the century, has brought an urbane charm, wealth of experience, and social vision to the complex problems of our times. The present collection of his essays dealing with such diverse subjects as art, literature, social action, and human relations, has been prepared by his confreres on the editorial staff of *America* as a companion volume to the autobiography, to indicate Father La Farge's verbal reaction to the events so interestingly described in the previous book. It is the purpose of the editors to present, not documented analyses with all of their scholarly accoutrements, but the spontaneous reactions over the years expressed in editorials and articles of a wise observer of the contemporary scene.

To say that Father La Farge's varied apostolate is founded on love of God and his fellow man (as he himself to touchingly and modestly explained at his jubilee banquet in 1955) is not to say that he has written in a sentimental or saccharine vein—as is evidenced by the asperity with which he describes the hapless Dr. Johnson of Canterbury, whose heavenly Jerusalem always looks like Moscow; or by artful vigor with which he exposes the mentality (or absence of it) of our congressmen who congratulated the "benevolent democrats" of the Spanish Cortes of 1938. It would also seem that Father La Farge was not emotionally overwhelmed by the manufactured lacrymation and international wailing that all but inundated the Rosenberg case.

To say that Father La Farge is a man of faith is not to say that he is without his disbelief. He does not seem to be convinced, for instance, that we can propel ourselves into beatitude either by thumping ourselves on the back, or by the power of positive thinking; nor does he see in the "unusual apostolic adventures" of some of our European brethren the effective revival of the Church in de-Christianized areas.

To say that Father La Farge is well loved is not to say that he has been or could not be disputed in his application of principles to the contingencies of the controversy engendered by our world. The sentence, for instance: "The function of art then is not only to provide a stimulus to social action but to suggest the method of action" would probably be as good an example as any to support Father's thesis that the monolithic uniformity, of which the well-tailored critics of the new nativism speak so glibly, is not the all-pervasive thing it is thought to be.

Finally, to say that Father La Farge has written his autobiography and authorized a selection of representative essays is not to say that he has stopped wielding the pen, chiding the complacent, or helping the unfortunate. This book is a helpful reminder that for all he is, as well as for all he is not, Father La Farge is a good person to have around.

ROBERT PAUL MOHAN, S.S.

SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINES. By Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., S.T.D., LL.D. Foreword by The Most Rev. Patrick A. O'Boyle, D.D., LL.D., Archbishop of Washington. New York: Frederick Pustet Co, Inc., 1955. Pp. xvii + 315. $6.00.

When a theologian, distinguished for the profundity of his knowledge and clarity of his presentation, prepares a series of sermon outlines, he performs a real service to his fellow priests, especially those who are charged with instructing the laity. Father Connell has performed such a service to his fellow priests in his latest work, *Sunday Sermon Outlines*. In view of what the Popes have said with regard to the importance of instructing the laity and the necessity of dispelling ignorance of things divine, a book such as this is welcome. Those priests whose time is taken up with many other duties will particularly appreciate these sermon outlines. The use of the outlines in the book will help the priest fulfill "the duty of instructing and teaching the laity—there is no more grave duty than this nor is there any obligation more binding than this one."

Father Connell not only has a thorough knowledge of his subject, but his wide experience as a lecturer and preacher has enabled him to present the matter of his book in an interesting manner. The author has not written the outlines with the idea that they would be memorized or even paraphrased. The preacher is supplied with a fund of pertinent information on the subject at hand. Armed with this information in the

outline, the priest will have no difficulty in constructing a sermon of ten or fifteen minutes duration.

Archbishop O'Boyle, in an enlightening foreword, praises the outlines which have been used in his archdiocese and "in a more simplified form [have been used] in many dioceses where both priest and laity have received them most favorably."

Sunday Sermon Outlines cover the content of the Apostles' Creed, the Moral Law, the Sacraments, the Sunday Gospels and the Holy Eucharist. An appendix gives an outline for December 8, August 15 and November 1. The series is so designed that it can be used every Sunday for five years.

If one part of the book were singled out for special praise, I think it would be the part on the Moral Law. The author not only considers the ways by which the moral law is violated, but he makes it quite clear that a good Catholic life does not consist merely in avoiding sin but in living a life of virtue. In this section there is a treatment of such an important subject as "Honesty in Business and Politics." Father Connell, although known in this country particularly for his contribution to and his work in the field of Moral Theology, has included many outlines which will please those who are looking for sermon material on this or that dogma of the faith. This is particularly true in the section on the Holy Eucharist. It is noteworthy that there are enough outlines on the Holy Eucharist for an instruction every Sunday for a year.

The index, which is quite complete, will provide easy topical reference for the priest.

In these outlines any priest will find ample material for a year's instruction on any of the subjects treated. Where a specific diocesan program has not been prescribed for the sermons on Sunday, these outlines would, beyond any doubt, provide a very fruitful source for sermon material and would be a great aid in dispelling an altogether too prevalent ignorance of things divine.

KENNETH B. MOORE, O. CARM.

ILS NE SAVENT PAS CE QU'ILS FONT. By Jean Madiran. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1955. Pp. 191.

ILS NE SAVENT PAS CE QU'ILS DISENT. By Jean Madiran. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1955. Pp. 186.

These two books, the second of which is a kind of sequel to the first, have attracted a great deal of attention during the past year in

France. Together they constitute a shrewd and highly effective contribution to one side of the great debate among French theologians and publicists.

Since the reign of Pope Leo XIII there has been a more or less continuous debate between two groups of French Catholic writers and, for that matter, between two groups of French Catholic periodicals. Up until fifty years ago, the writings of one group were conspicuous for a kind of sympathy shown to the persons and the theories of the early Modernists and for a bitter antipathy towards the persons and the publications of the men who defended Catholic doctrine against the Modernistic attacks. Since the condemnation of Modernism by St. Pius X the literary productions of this group have been marked by a special animus against the writers they designate as "integralists." Mauriac called these people "for want of a better name, the Catholics of the left." They have become numerous and more articulate since the end of the second world war.

The second group, considerably less vocal than the first, is and has been made up of men resolutely and explicitly opposed to Modernism and to all deviation from Catholic teaching as set forth by the authentic *magisterium* of the Church. The older members of this group were outstanding in their denunciation of Modernism. In more recent years this group distinguished itself by its opposition to the tenets of the "new theology" which were repudiated by Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Humani generis*. Although they support the teaching of the Catholic faith in its entirety or integrity, they do not claim the title of "integralists." And, if the "Catholics of the left" glory in being "anti-integralists," their opponents, as Father Raymond Dulac has said so well, can perhaps consider themselves as "anti-anti-integralists."

Basically the periodicals of the "Catholics of the left" have sought the good of souls and the advance of God's kingdom on earth. But they have tried to obtain their objective by making Catholic teaching seem more attractive to the people so as to penetrate more effectively among the people. In recent years the directors of these periodicals have come to imagine that Communism (in practice, if not in its theory) was in some way particularly pleasing to the masses they were trying to influence for Our Lord. Hence the papers they controlled tended to oppose any militant corporate Catholic activity against Communism. It is precisely on this point that they are examined, and examined brilliantly on the pages of *Ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils font*.

The first result of that scrutiny is the information that the periodicals of the "Catholics of the left" formed an astonishingly compact group. They were joined to one another by the ties of overlapping financial

control and effective management. A number of individuals held official positions on two or more of these papers. The result of this situation has been that a comparatively small group of people could and did influence the doctrinal tendencies of a rather considerable portion of the French Catholic press.

Madiran then indicates the lack of objectivity manifest in the pronouncements of these publications. He shows how they had always assumed that their cause was that of the poor, and that, on the contrary, the journals of the "right" were arrayed on the side of the rich. "In the press as it actually stands," Madiran asserts and shows, "the poverty is on the 'right' and the wealth on the 'left'." He likewise points to the naivete of the directors of these periodicals of the "Catholic left" in assuming the truth of Communist claims and in writing in Communist terminology. The men opposed by Madiran had acted on the assumption that the Communist labor unions were actually representing the French laboring men when, as he points out so forcefully, the available evidence served to show that the great majority of these workers were completely hostile to these organizations.

By far the strongest part of the book is the chapter "Si l'Evangile est vrai. . . ." Madiran, more effectively than any other writer I have ever read, unmasks the fundamental untruth and ugliness of the leftist contention that the priest associates with the workers so as to prepare a future communion in the Church through the preparation of a human community among these workers. He points to the fact that the primitive Church did not consider it necessary for the slaves of the ancient Roman Empire to receive their freedom before they could be evangelized. On the contrary, the Church preached the Gospel to these men and women, and received them into its company, without waiting for any amelioration of their social condition. And it taught them to fight against the sins they themselves had committed, instead of leading them to examine and to condemn the sins of other people. In acting thus, the Church was simply following the directions given to it by its divine Founder.

Madiran's book has done and is doing a tremendous amount of good in France. The second volume, *Ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils disent,* takes up the attacks made against the first volume. It is eminently successful. If any person wants to know the current status of French Catholic periodical literature, and is looking for an accurate and readable analysis of present-day doctrinal tendencies in this field, he can do no better than consult these two books.

JOSEPH CLIFFORD FENTON

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS. By Joseph J. Spae, C.I.C.M. Himeji, Japan: Committee of the Apostolate, 1956. Pp. 210. $2.00.

Since the circulation of books by Godin, Cardijn, and Michonneau, more American priests have been discussing carefully (often hotly) the missionary role of the parish. Although making a definite American contribution to the growing literature, they continue to look to Europe for additional guidance in clearer principles and better methods to reach the American non-Catholics "commended to them in the Lord." But, it is feared, this valuable Continental apostolate may hypnotize us. We look in one direction—Europe. We may be blind to other revolutions in other parishes. For example, if we would but turn in the opposite direction, we would see that rich apostolic parochial life being planned and carried into splendid effect on the islands of Japan.

For four hundred years the Church in Japan, like one of those diminutive trees, has been tough and beautiful, but small, concealed, on the defensive. Since the war the Church is growing toward more conspicuous and vigorous stature, rightly on the offensive. The pattern of growth has much to offer in inspiration and technique.

An important phase in Japan's post-war program of 170,000 Catholics converting 80,000,000 countrymen has been well detailed by Father Spae's *Neighborhood Associations*—a valuable contribution to missiological literature. In good balance, it outlines the foundations of any parish apostolate and gives the practical program for the Japanese parish. And the program is not the musing of a lone missionary. Father Spae, a Belgian Sheut Father who has spent most of his priesthood in the Orient, is Secretary General of the hierarchy's Committee of the Apostolate. Besides being a hard-thinking theologian-sociologist who knows well the missionary principles of accommodation, he is a hard-working pastor who is applying the principles to his parish. In 1949 he took a parish in Himeji. Today the Himeji Church is the most flourishing parish in Japan; the ten parishioners of 1949 have increased to over two thousand. His parish program well deserves the praise and approval given it by the Apostolic Nuncio to Japan in the preface.

Briefly, the Church is baptizing one of the oldest social structures in Japan. For thirteen hundred years the Japanese have instinctively collected in small neighborhood groups (*tonarigumi*) to fill the individual's need for intimacy, mutual banter, and the solving of local problems. Especially in emergencies, the rulers have relied repeatedly on these closely knit units which voluntarily welded every man, woman, and child into a gigantic single force. In 1940 the *tonarigumi* were officially recognized. All Japan was split into small family groups which

had to meet frequently for strategy in civil defense, public welfare and relief, rationing, and, most especially, for "building national morality and a national spirit of cooperation." The Occupation disbanded the associations, but, in a voluntary, non-political way, the Japanese have reverted to these small organized group meetings.

The Church has put to advantage the *tonarigumi* system. The neighborhood association becomes "a way of life by which all Catholics within the parish, in officially and geographically distributed groups, collaborate in the work of the parish." It is the complete organization of the parish, not just another form of the traditional "parish society." It is not for the elite but for *all*. Each parishioner is assigned to his neighborhood unit (no more than thirty in a unit, although about half attend a regular meeting). One of the members is a group leader. The leaders of the parish meet with pastor and curates to discuss local problems and receive the catechetical instructions which, in turn, are imparted at the group meetings.

The neighborhood association becomes an *ecclesiola electorum* among the non-Catholics, the Japanese *testimonium fidei* "by which all men will know us for Christ's disciples." Essential to its purpose of growing in the Christian way of life is a genuine concern for society and its potential members of the Mystical Body. There are various projects: in Himeji, building a home for the neediest family, whether Christian or non-Christian; locating the vital spots in local hospitals, schools, and factories that are open, and working as a body to get qualified Catholics into these spots; planning religious pageants for the whole city, etc.

An interesting example of a Catholic conscience is the group's reception of a convert. From the first days of the catechumenate, the average *baptizandus* is assigned to a group. The group leader contacts him, congratulates him, and invites him to the next group meeting. The first meeting after baptism is organized for the neophyte who occupies the place of honor. He sees he belongs to the Church. He needs the Church; the Church needs him. "It is doubtful whether the ordinary convert will stay with the Church if he is not shown immediately before or after baptism what his role is, and put into circumstances to fulfill it."

Father Spae gives the theological, psychological, and social foundations for these *tonarigumi*—a broad arch stretching from the Rahner-Steiner dispute on the lay apostolate to the proper way of eating pastry on a parish visitation. He outlines the role of the priest, group leader, and individual member during and between meetings. He displays his insight into the Japanese temperament and is not afraid to tackle the

practical problems of an over-worked people with increasing class consciousness and religious indifference.

Fortunately, the author has not that mental quirk Michonneau mentions of thinking the founding of an organization equals the success of that organization. On the contrary, Father Spae has acquired the proverbial patience of the East. He realizes that neighborhood associations are in their infancy. They presuppose slow formation of both priest and laity. They exact a frame of mind about the collaboration of the laity and the structure of the parish often lost sight of in the first stages of Catholic Action or in past parochial societies.

The book is highly recommended. Japan is one more missionary country that has seen the potential fruitfulness of the primitive use of organized families of Christ-bearers in their milieu—a technique utilized by the "Anneau d'Or" in France and the Christian Family Movement in the United States. That is why the publication of Japan's efforts is so valuable. We are all members of a dynamic Church, learning one from another.

THOMAS F. STRANSKY, C.S.P.

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH ART. By Anton Henze and Theodor Filthaut. Translated by Cecily Hastings; edited by Maurice Lavanoux. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956. Pp. 128. $7.50.

This book is not entirely a picture book, though its format and the relative proportion of pictures to text would give that impression. There are one hundred and twenty-seven pages of photographs to something less than sixty pages of text, newly translated from the German original of Anton Henze and Theodor Filthaut. The text is not lightly to be omitted from any consideration of the book, and would form, I think, a stimulating treatise even without the pictures which dominate the whole.

The text is divided into two essays of unequal length. The first, by Anton Henze, deals with the potentialities of modern Church art, and its position in history. This section, with no attempt at an exhaustive study, undertakes to place those art forms deriving from the Post-Impressionists of the late nineteenth century, in so far as they bear upon Church architecture and the other plastic arts that are employed in the services of the Church, as the true heirs of the great art forms of the past. Thus the "historicism" of the popular art forms of the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries is taken as a target for attack. Its twofold purpose is announced as "an attempt to deal (in outline) with questions (by friend and foe) provoked by the productions of contemporary architects and artists," and "to answer questions put by the contemporary artist to the Church in her role as patron."

The denunciation of sentimental historicism in church building is not a new cry, though the fact that "gothic" churches continue to be built gives testimony to the need for more voices, and justifies this reasonable polemic. The essay stresses the notion of the contemporary church as the Tent of God. This thesis develops the idea of the church building's conforming to the structure most characteristic of the ruling group of an age, and that group's idea of God. Bringing this argument to bear on the contemporary church, the ruling group of today is called the technical industrial worker, "homeless and looking for 'redemption'," its idea of God is Christ the Redeemer, and its characteristic building a tent-like steel-frame structure. All this is summed up in a schematic diagram.

The second, and shorter, essay is on Church Art and the Liturgy, and is by Theodor Filthaut. This section treats of the church and the appurtenances thereof in the light of scriptural passages, canon law, the liturgical books, and certain encyclicals of the Popes, and is very useful.

The illustrations, which make up the greater part of the book, are handsome photographs ranging in subject from exterior and interior views of churches down to host boxes. Their choice, according to the preface, was not made because of the perfection of artistic achievement but rather for their representative quality. With this in mind, one cannot object that some of the artifacts chosen as representative fail to achieve artistic distinction. Maurice Lavanoux, the editor of *Liturgical Arts,* who provides a preface to the American edition of this book, says in the preface that, "it is when we become consciously modern that our troubles begin," and I am afraid that some of the objects shown among the illustrations fall into the category of being "consciously modern."

I am sorry that the authors did not see fit to show more photographs of the churches of Perret, Moser, Schwarz and Bohm. These architects are given credit for establishing the contemporary style, and as one reads of the progress of their innovations, one feels the desire to see more of the work, called the cradle of modern Church architecture.

This is a genuinely useful book, and a beautiful book. It would be helpful to pastors who are planning a building program, or are considering the refurbishing of their churches. It should be especially useful

in the hands of seminarians upon whose taste the future churches and their appointments depend.

DOM STEPHEN REID

A PATH THROUGH GENESIS. By Bruce Vawter, C.M. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956. Pp. 308; maps and illustrations. $4.00.

Was Mathusale really 969 years old? Why did the builders of the tower of Babel want it to reach to the heavens? Is it possible that Sara at the age of sixty-five was still so beautiful that Pharao and later Abimelech forced her into their harem? Who was Melchisedech? How could Jacob wrestle with an angel? Was his impersonation of Esau in order to win Isaac's blessing honestly a "mysterium," and not a "mendacium"? These and many other intriguing questions are discussed in this extremely important commentary on Genesis. But they are not its primary concern. Father Vawter does more than pay lip service to ecclesiastical directives on Scripture. He has taken seriously Pope Pius' recommendation that Catholic commentators "set forth in particular the theological doctrine in faith and morals of the individual books" of the Bible (*Divino afflante Spiritu,* EB §551). And so the reader's attention is called again and again to the fact that Genesis is a *theology of history, Heilsgeschichte,* and that to read it as anything else is to miss its point. The "problems" are discussed honestly and a solution proposed whenever we have one, but these problems are never permitted to divert us from the inspired author's real message. Many a priest who has studied only the difficulties of Genesis will be thrilled to discover its abiding lessons and realize its significant contributions to revelation.

Readers of this journal will recognize that Father Vawter's approach to Genesis i-xi is the same as that of Father Arbez (see his articles in *AER* 1950, 81-92, 202-13, 284-94). The facts described in these chapters were not handed down in an uninterrupted line from Adam to Abraham, nor were they revealed anew to the biblical writers. Rather, they are "a catalogue of the fundamental truths of faith which underlie the Jewish and Christian revelations, and a popular description of the origins of men, done in the simple and figurative language that is proper to primitive peoples" (p. 33). If this approach sounds advanced, the reader must bear in mind that it is the one recommended repeatedly by the Church's Magisterium!

Determining the literary genre of Genesis xii-l is a more delicate task. This section, the bulk of the work (pp. 113-308), is the more

valuable because we Catholics have nothing to compare to it in English. We may be grateful that a scholar of Father Vawter's competence has undertaken the long overdue work. He shows that these chapters give us religious, popular, family history, rather than history as we understand it, though it deals with facts that can be indirectly controlled by the vastly richer knowledge that is now ours, thanks especially to archeology. Father Vawter has assimilated the best of modern scholarship on the questions, re-thought them as a man of faith, and now shares his conclusions with us in clear, forceful, and idiomatic English.

This is emphatically a book that we have been waiting for; every priest and seminarian should read it from beginning to end and keep it handy for reference. The first reading, however, must be a *complete reading;* it will not do to pick out random sections to look up. Like any other good teacher, Father Vawter presupposes that his reader is progressing and in the later chapters he takes for granted a foundation firmly laid. If you begin with chapter xlix you may be as much at sea, as if you began reading the Bible with the New instead of the Old Testament. And Father Vawter solemnly protests that "the oft-repeated advice to 'read the New Testament first, then the Old'" is "one of those witless axioms supposedly based on experience, but in reality pure untested theory."

EDWARD F. SIEGMAN, C.PP.S.

THE CYPRESSES BELIEVE IN GOD. By José María Gironella. Translated by Harriet de Onís. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1956. Pp. ix + 1010. $5.95.

"César could not understand what had happened in the mountains . . . During the nights he had spent in prayer, every now and then he had gone to the window, and if the moon was shining, or a light in the patio was burning, had watched the poplar leaves trembling as though greeting him, or at times as though weeping slow tears. No one was capable of setting fire to them deliberately! Not to mention the cypresses, which seemed to him the trees that had the most reason to believe in God."

The sensitivity of the seminarian-martyr, César, of Gironella's novel seems to symbolize the genius of the author himself in capturing in a novel of extraordinary narrative power the spirit and the subtle motivations of the people in the tortured Spain of Civil War days.

This is not a new novel, but a new single-volume edition of a work published over a year ago in its English translation in two volumes. It is, to put it simply, one of the finest novels this reviewer has read in a decade.

Bertita Harding, in an introduction to one of her historical novels, once quoted the questionable opinion that history was an art, and was to be written in the imagination. Gironella, by an inversion of this process, has written a novel that seems like history. One has the feeling in reading of the fictitious Alvears of Gerona that he has learned more of the cultural climate in which the Civil War was conceived than in most academic treatises on the subject.

One is reminded that after the publication of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel,* one of Asheville's citizens who knew the people of whom Wolfe wrote, supposedly said, in inarticulate tribute to Wolfe's undisciplined but brilliant power to bring a town and its people to throbbing life: "That's how it was!" This is Gironella's talent.

In the five-year span of the novel we see the forces at work which result in the final explosion of the war. There is a richness of narrative incident and detail here that makes a résumé difficult; but social, religious, and political vicissitudes of a family and a nation are woven deftly into a completely believable pattern. Matías Alvear, his devout Basque wife, Carmen Elgazu, the central figure, son Ignacio, César, the latter's seminarian brother, and Pilar, their brightly attractive sister, and their fellow citizens of Gerona, are all superbly-drawn characters.

The author's basic conviction in writing is that Spain is an unknown land, and his aim is to capture through the medium of a middle-class family, and the day to day life of a provincial capital, the mentality of a people "in all their pettiness and all their grandeur." His novel is both an explanation and a defense of the complexity of Spain that makes her such a mystery to foreigners.

The Cypresses has been referred to by reviewer Fr. Robert Flood as "the intellectual biography of our time." But it is more than that.

In an age in which the popular novel has so often been a dreary preoccupation with the pathological and the sordid, evidencing a "realistic" style that one critic has quaintly characterized as "relentlessly lavatorial," Gironella has brought forth a powerful fresh talent that is artistic without being "arty," forceful without being strident, and explicit without being obscene.

It is to be hoped that this novel will have the success it deserves; and it is to be hoped too that its author will continue to illumine the mystery of Spain in all of its tragic beauty.

It may be added that few authors have suffered so little at the hands of their translators. In Harriet de Onis' translation, the author's words, with few expections, have been beautifully rendered.

ROBERT PAUL MOHAN, S.S.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE BIBLE. By Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1956. Pp. 120, map, illustrations. $1.50.

Readers of this *Review* will be delighted that Father Murphy has expanded his *AER* articles on the Qumran finds (CXXXIV [June 1956], 361-73; CXXXV [July 1956], 9-22) into an attractive, beautifully printed, and reasonably priced paperback. Chapter I (pp. 1-26) re-tells the exciting story of the discoveries, reports on the archeological investigation of the terrain, and sketches the history and life of the Qumran sectaries as known from their library and archeological remains. Part of this material appeared in the June *AER*.

Chapter II ("The Old Testament in the Light of the Scrolls and Fragments," pp. 29-52) is entirely new and eminently worthwhile. Because modern journalism dictated sensationalism in the reporting of the Qumran finds and their significance, very little has been said in popular treatment about their importance for the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament and for the oldest translation of the Bible, the Septuagint. Father Murphy fills in this lacuna and supplies sufficient background information about the history of the Old Testament text to enable the reader to appreciate the advances we owe to the scrolls. While they confirm what scholars generally held, namely, that our Old Testament Hebrew text was copied and edited with considerable freedom in the period from its composition to the Christian era, they also furnish new proof that the Old Testament has been preserved with surprising substantial accuracy and merits full confidence. The finds also tell us something about the kind of Hebrew text which the Septuagint translators used and hence make it more valuable for the establishment of a critical text of the Old Testament. Finally, they add to our knowledge of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages in a period where information was quite scanty. Now we are much better acquainted with the Aramaic that Jesus spoke and we also realize that Hebrew was at His time still "very much alive," even if no longer a living language.

Chapter III ("The New Testament . . ." pp. 55-108) appeared in part in *AER*, but entirely new sections have been added on "The Sermon on the Mount" and "The Acts and Epistles." Conservative scholars have

tended to underplay the resemblances between the Qumran teachings and the New Testament, in understandable reaction to the wild speculations of A. Dupont-Sommer and his admirers, e.g., John Allegro and Edmund Wilson, not to mention the J. Powell Davies's who have a very dull axe to grind. But Father Murphy is not frightened by the misrepresentations. He gives the parallels as fully as limitations of space and purpose permit, concludes from *present* data with the best scholarship against the probability of direct literary dependence, and thinks that similarities can be explained on the score that "these Essene teachings were part of the general religious trend in which Christianity was born" (p. 107). He agrees that St. John the Baptist "must have had some contact with them [the Qumran Essenes] because he echoes several points that are found in their teachings" (p. 64).

Chronology and notes on the main events of the discoveries and important dates in the transmission of the Old Testament text make up two appendices (pp. 111-19). When parishioners ask for something to read about the scrolls, this is the book to give them.

EDWARD F. SIEGMAN, C.PP.S.

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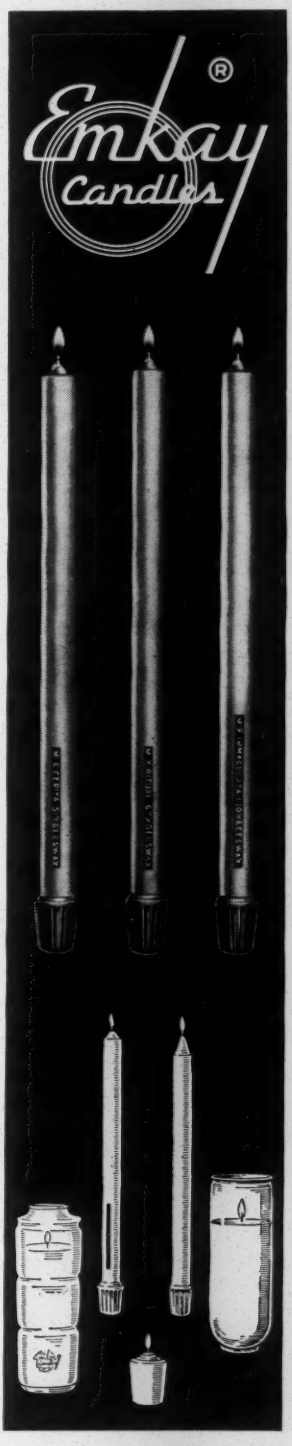

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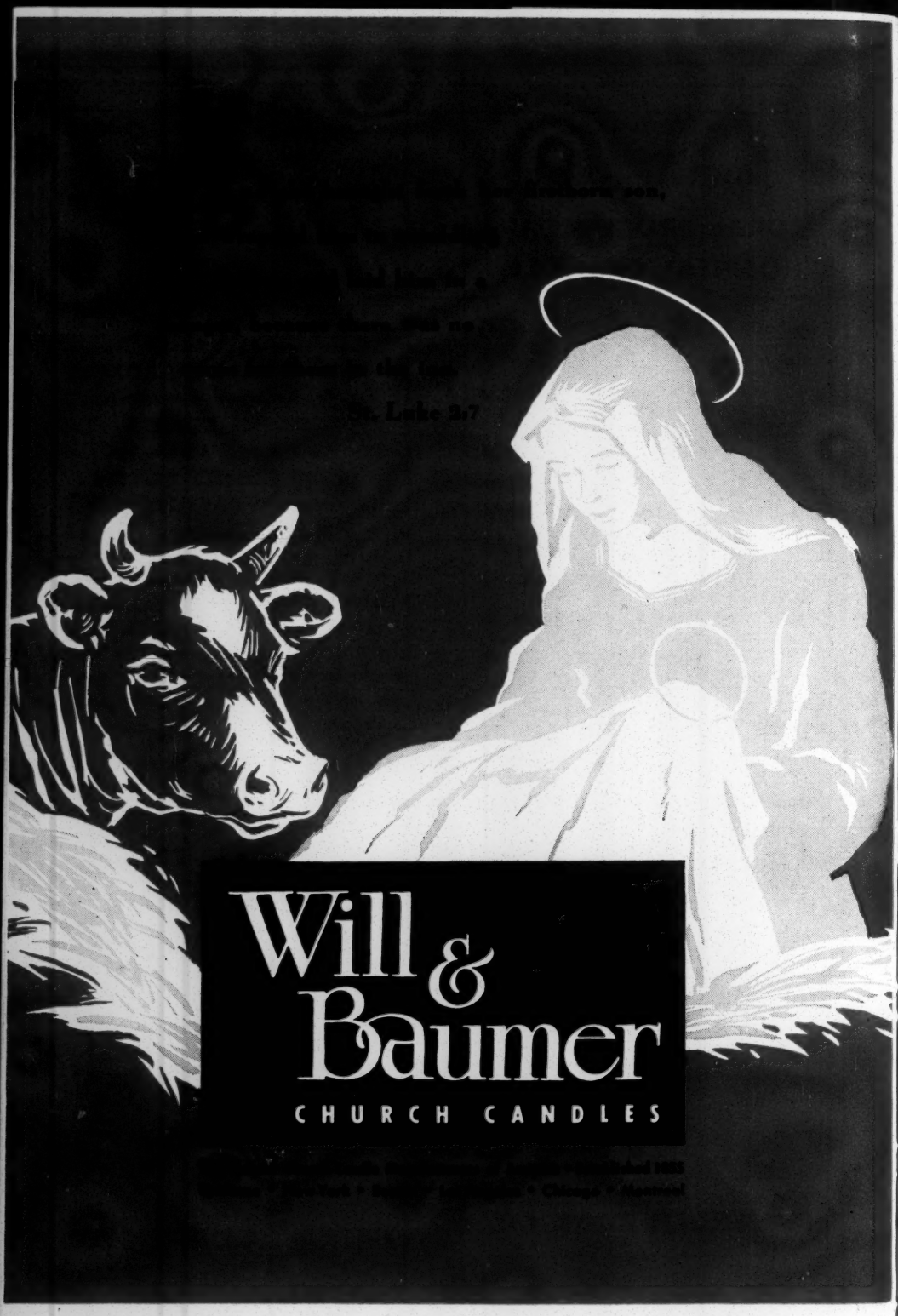
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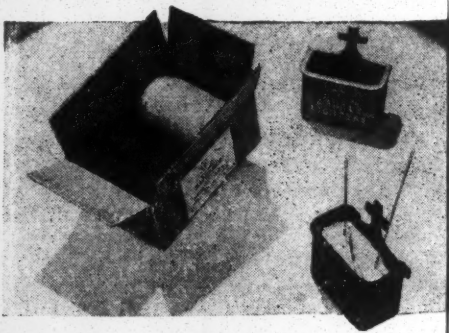

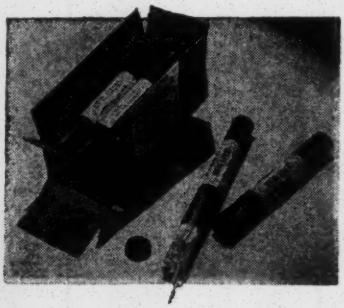

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